







**L E T T E R S**  
**O N**  
**E G Y P T,**

**CONTAINING,**

**A Parallel Between the Manners of its ancient  
and modern Inhabitants, its Commerce,  
Agriculture, Government and Religion;**

**WITH**

**The Descent of LOUIS IX. at DAMIETTA.**

**EXTRACTED FROM**

**JOINVILLE, AND ARABIAN AUTHORS.**

**TRANSLATED**

**From the FRENCH of M. SAVARY.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

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# L E T T E R S O N E G Y P

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## L E T T E R I.

### THE ROUTE FROM ACHMIM TO DENDERA.

*Souadi described, on the east of which are two ancient monasteries, surrounded by the ruins which denote the site of Crocodilepolis. Observations on Menchia, and the ancient Ptolemais of Hermes, the ruins of which are not far distant; with the state of the neighbouring country. Remarks on Girga, the capital of Upper Egypt, and on Abydos, which stands to the west. The famous temple of Osiris, into which singers and musicians were forbidden to enter, is at this place. Remarks on Farchout, and its delightful orchards. The ruins of Tentyra, near Dendera, the hatred of its ancient in-  
codiles.*

M.

Grand Cairo, 1779.

LEAVE we the town of Achmim, and the serpent Haridi, and let us cross the Nile,

where we shall see the little town of Souadi, governed by a Cachef. Proceeding westward we find two Coptic monasteries, at the entrance of the desert. Their churches are ornamented by Corinthian columns, with a cross in the center of the capital, and paved with red granite, in which numerous hieroglyphics are sculptured. Their architecture betokens the decay of taste among the Greeks, and they are supposed to have been built by the Empress Helena. Various antique marbles are scattered over the space that divides them, which indicate the site of Crocodilopolis (*y*). This city was distant from the river, and Ptolemy places it near Aphroditopolis, or the city of Venus.

Turning to the south east, we cross a plain shaded by various trees, abounding in corn, and intersected by rivulets. This leads to the little town of Menchia, which has a large mosque, and a considerable market. The Bazars are provided with commodities of all kinds, and a conserve of wheat is to be had here, much esteemed in

(*y*) Ptolemy, l. 4. This is a second city of that name; the first stood near Fayoum, and was better known by the name of Arsinoe.

this country, made from wheat steeped two days in water, dried afterwards in the sun, and then boiled to the thickness of a lly : thus prepared it is called Elueda, dew, and is melting, sweet, and very nutritive. If this kind of conserve, dried in an oven, would keep at sea, it might be of great use in long voyages.

South of Menchia, on an eminence, ruins of entablatures, cornices, and shafts of columns are seen. Here there is a quay, beside the river, and a projecting mole preserves the vessels from the winds and waves. These ruins, and ancient works, recal to mind the great Ptolemais which Strabo compares to Memphis for extent and population (z). Ptolemy names it Ptolemais of Hermes, because Mercury the symbolical deity was worshipped there (a).

Now, while the wind is driving us southward, let us look before us to the rocks which rise on the eastern coast, and we shall perceive the small convent *Der Hadid*, situated in the midst of the desert, surrounded by sterile cliffs, and caverns which the zeal

(z) Strabo, lib. 17.—(a) Ptolemy, lib. 4.

of the primitive christians peopled with pious anchorets. Can there be a more frightful wilderness near so enchanting a country? On one side nothing can be seen but barren sands and parched mountains, from which the reverberated heat of the sun is suffocating. Turn to the other, and we there admire the copious treasures of abundance. The Dourra, with reedy leaf and swelling ears, shoots up its vigorous stalk; the waving corn is ready for the sickle; vast fields of sugar-canes and flax flourish beside each other; the redness of the date-tree betokens ripeness; the palm of the Thebais spreads its fan leaves, and the garden melon grows pendant over the river banks. Such is the aspect of these plains now, and it is the beginning of December.

We are drawing near to the port of Girga, the capital of Upper Egypt. This city is a league in circumference, contains several mosques, bazars, and squares, but no marble buildings; well cultivated gardens surround it; a Bey is the governor, whose soldiers commit innumerable oppressions. The Copts are not allowed to have a church here, but are obliged to perform their religious duties

duties in a convent built on the other side of the Nile. Girga affords no vestiges of ancient edifices, but appears to be a modern built town, for it is not mentioned by Abulfeda.

After an hour's walk eastward, we come to the ruins of Abydus, where Ismandes built a magnificent temple, in honour of Osiris, the only one in Egypt into which musicians and singers were denied entrance. Reduced to a village, under the reign of Augustus, this town at present contains only heaps of ruins, without inhabitants, but to the west of these ruins we still find the above-mentioned temple built by Ismandes (*b*).

The entrance is under a portico, sixty feet high, supported by two rows of large columns. In this massy marble building, and the hieroglyphics with which it abounds, we discover the work of the ancient Egyptians. Beyond is a temple, three hundred feet in length, and one hundred and forty five wide. At the entrance is an immense

(*b*) Strabo, lib. 17. calls him Ismandes, and Memnon, and says this is the same monarch who built the Labyrinth.

hall containing eight-and-twenty columns, sixty feet high, and nineteen in circumference at the base; they stand each twelve feet asunder. The enormous stones of the cieling are so perfectly joined, and inserted one in the other, as to appear, to the eye, one sole marble slab, one hundred and twenty-six feet in length, and sixty-six in breadth. The walls are loaded with innumerable hieroglyphics, among which are a multitude of animals, birds, and human figures wearing pointed caps (*c*), with a piece of pendant stuff behind, and cloathed in open robes which do not descend below the waist. The rudeness of the sculpture bespeaks antiquity, and art in its infancy. The forms, attitudes, and proportions are all bad. Among these various groups, we perceive women suckling their children, and men presenting offerings to them. The traveller, likewise, recognizes among the designs engraved on the marble, the divinities of India. M. Chevalier, Governor of Chandernagore, who lived thirty years in the East, where he rendered very essential service to his country, examined this antient monument very carefully, on

(c) These caps are still worn by the Egyptian priests on festivals.

his

his re<sup>turn</sup> from Bengal, and remarked the gods *Jaggrenat*, *Gonez*, and *Vishnou*, such as they are represented in the temples of Indostan. Have the Egyptians received these deities from the Indians, or the Indians from the Egyptians? Were that question answered, it might decide the antiquity of the two people.

At the farther end of the first hall is the great door, which leads to an apartment forty-six feet long and twenty-two wide. Six square pillars support the cieling, and four doors, at the corners, lead to four other chambers, to which, however, the heaps of rubbish forbid all entrance. The last hall, sixty-four feet long, and twenty-four wide, contains stair-cases leading to the subterranean parts of this grand edifice. The Arabs, searching for hidden treasure, have heaped earth and ruins on each other. In those parts into which it was possible to penetrate, we find sculptures and hieroglyphics similar to those above ground. The natives assert the apartments are the same, and that the depth of the columns below the earth equals their height. It might be dangerous to descend too far into these vaults; the air is infected,



and so loaded with mephitic vapours that it is difficult to keep a candle lighted.

Six lions heads, on two sides of the temple, serve as water-spouts. A very singular stair-case leads to the summit of the building; it is formed by the stones being inserted in the wall, from which they project six feet; so that, being only sustained on one side, they appear suspended in the air. Neither the walls, roof, nor columns of this edifice, are injured by time; and, did not the hieroglyphics, which are defaced in many places, shew marks of age, it would seem as if newly built. Such is its solidity, it will stand for ages, unless purposely destroyed. The colossal figures, the heads of which serve as ornaments to the capitals of the columns, are in basso relievo; but all the remaining hieroglyphics within the temple are cut into the stone.

On the left of this great building there is a smaller one, at the farther end of which stands a kind of altar. This appears to have been the sanctuary of the temple of Osiris. I observed before, Sir, that entrance was forbidden to singers and dancers. The Egyptian priests invented seven vowels, to

each of which they affixed a sound, like the notes of our gamut (*d*); and, that they might preserve this invention, they repeated, at stated times, these vowels in the form of a hymn, the successive tones and modulations of which produced an agreeable melody. This, no doubt, was the reason they excluded all instruments of music from the temple; and to these were the Greeks indebted in the composition of their language; which was so musical, and perfectly accented, as that a discourse, well delivered, was a pleasing recitative. Piccini, Gluck, and Sacchini, have taught us to admire the grating tones of the French language, by their learned and harmonious modulation; what then would they have done with these ancient tongues? Let us no longer be astonished at the marvellous effects which are related concerning the music of the Greeks; for they possessed all the treasures of melody, all the riches of an imitative language, and spoke, at once, to the ear, the understanding, and the heart. It is now time to quit

(*d*) Plutarch. *De Iside et Osiride* \*.

\* We remember no such passage, nor on a slight revision, can we find any such in the above cited treatise. It is perhaps an error of copying, or printing. T.

the antique temple of Ifmandes, beside which, according to Strabo, there was a forest of the Acacia, consecrated to Apollo, and of which there are some remains, towards Farchout.

The Turkish government from Girga to Syene is by no means well established ; most of the lands are possessed by independent Arabs. Those who inhabit the mountains, to the east of Girga, pay no tribute, but grant an asylum to all malecontents ; nay, often embrace their cause, and furnish them with arms to re-enter Grand Cairo.

The island of Doum is not far distant from Girga (*e*), and above stands the port of Bardis, a small town dependent on the Grand Sheik. The government of this prince is very extensive, and his usual residence is Farchout, beside which runs an arm of the Nile. He owns a vast inclosure here, in which are planted palms, dates, vines, orange trees, acacia, nabech, and the Arabian jasmine. Tufts of basil, and clusters of rose bushes, are scattered here and there among these trees, which, though planted

(*e*) Doum is the name which the Arabs give to the fan-leaved palm tree.

without

## O N E G Y P T.

without either design or taste, afford most delightful shades. Were nature and art combined, charming gardens might be formed, at a small expence; for this happy climate possesses a fruitful soil, water in abundance, the most odoriferous shrubs, and a sky the most serene.

The village of Beliana is also dependant on the Grand Sheik, and situated between two canals, which render it a most agreeable abode. Facing it are some hamlets, inhabited by Arabs, who infest the river with their piracies, especially during night. *Passing the arm of the Nile which goes to Far-chout*, we come to Badjoura, whence we see an agreeable island, and have a distant prospect of the village of Attarif. The town of Hau, built on an eminence, overlooks the country to the west; and hides the ruins of Diospolis Parva (*f*), the little city of Jupiter. The Egyptians had secured this city from the inundation by their labours, which advantage Hau likewise enjoys. It rises like an island, while the plains are overflowed

(*f*) Strabo, lib. 17. Ptolemy, lib. 4. place Diospolis Parva, between Abydus and Tentyra, on a height, a situation which perfectly agrees with the town of Hau.

with

with water. The inhabitants of Badjoura, and the neighbouring hamlets, inter their dead there.

The rocks diverge from the eastern shore of the Nile, near the villages of Cafr and Fau; the first was formerly the town of which Abulfeda gives the following description: "Cafr is a day's journey south of  
"Cous, on the east side of the river. The  
"neighbouring country abounds in corn and  
"palm trees. A great number of earthen  
"vessels are made there, and dispersed over  
"the rest of Egypt (g)." Since the time of Abulfeda, the town of Cafr has lost the greatest part of its trade and inhabitants, and is now only a village of small importance.

The western shore of the Nile, better peopled, affords a more smiling prospect, of date tree groves, *doum*, dispersed around the houses, rich plains of wheat, and pasturage covered by flocks. The small town of Dendera contains nothing remarkable; but about a league to the west are the remains of the ancient Tentyra. Heaps of rubbish, and

(g) Abulfeda, Description of Egypt.

extensive ruins, indicate the grandeur of this city, the inhabitants of which, according to Strabo, worshipped Isis and Venus (*b*). Among these ruins, on a small eminence, are two ancient temples, worthy of admiration. The largest only two hundred feet long, and one hundred and forty in breadth, is surrounded by a double frieze. It is divided into several lofty apartments, supported by large columns, which have a square stone for their capital, on which is sculptured the head of Isis. Hieroglyphics, in compartments, cover the walls. Colossal figures stand at the outward angles, and ten flights of steps lead to the summit of the temple.

The second, standing on the right, is smaller. The cornice, which is carried round it, and the gate, are decorated by falcons, with spreading wings. A doubled square stone serves as a capital to columns which support the roof. On the walls, various rows of figures, of men, birds, and animals, are sculptured. These hierogly-

(*b*) Strabo. lib. 17.

phics were the history of the times. Could we read them, we should probably know whether these were temples dedicated to Isis or Venus. The same solidity may be remarked here as in those of Abydus, but less grandeur and magnificence.

Before I conclude my letter, I will quote what Strabo says concerning the aversion in which the Tentyrites held the crocodile, a reptile revered in many other cities. “ The inhabitants of Tentyra abhor the crocodile, and wage continual war against him, as the most dangerous of animals. Other men, thinking him the most pernicious, avoid him; the Tentyrites, on the contrary, eagerly hunt for and kill him, wherever they can find him. The Psylli of Cyrene are known to possess a certain power over serpents, and it is commonly thought the Tentyrites are endowed with the like virtue over crocodiles. They plunge and swim audaciously into the middle of the Nile, without receiving harm. During the shows exhibited at Rome, several crocodiles were put into a basin, on one side of which was an open-  
“ ing

“ ing for them to swim out. Into this ba-  
“ son the Tentyrites threw themselves a-  
“ mong these monsters, took and drew them  
“ forth in a net. After exposing them to  
“ be seen by the Roman people, they once  
“ more intrepidly seized and brought them  
“ back (*i*).” A fact thus attested by a judicious historian, who was himself an eye witness, cannot be doubted. Do not the natives of the Caribbe islands, armed only with a knife, advantageously combat the shark, one of the most dreadful of sea monsters? There still are found determined men in Egypt, who dare attack the crocodile. They swim towards him, and, as he opens his formidable jaws to swallow them up, they thrust in a plank of fir, to which a rope is tied. The crocodile, by closing his jaws forcibly, indents his sharp teeth so far into the wood as to be unable to draw them out; the Egyptian swims to shore with his rope; after which several men draw on shore and kill the monster. This is not performed without danger, for should the

(*i*) Strabo, lib. 17.

swimmer



swimmer fail in his attempt, he is instantly devoured. I have never myself been a witness of this dangerous sport; but many people in Grand Cairo have assured me the thing is true.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R II.

GIENA, COPHTOS, COUS, AND THE ROUTE,  
TO COSSEIR, ON THE RED SEA, DE-  
SCRIBED.

*Cophtos, Cous, and Giena, in successive possession of the trade of the Red Sea. Labours of the Ptolemies to protect, and present state of, that trade. Description of the route from Giena to Cossair, a small town and harbour, but with a good road. Precautions necessary in crossing the desert. Means of rendering the road safer, and the advantages which would thence result.*

Grand Cairo.

FROM Dendera, Sir, Giena is seen upon an eminence. The ancients, who called it Cœnæ (*k*), do not speak of any remarkable building it contained, nor is its present state more flourishing, although become the rendezvous of the caravans that go to Cossair.

(*k*) Ptolemy, lib. 4. calls it Cœnæ, or the new town.

A canal runs beside it, which formerly was navigable, but, neglected by the Turks, is always dry, except during the time of the inundation. Though Giena contains no remarkable edifices, its environs well deserve the attention of travellers. They are laid out in gardens, which produce excellent oranges, dates, lemons, and exquisite melons; and the clustering trees form arbours and shades, the convenience of which are forcibly felt under this burning sky.

Above Giena are the ruins of Cophtos (*l*), which city, having been built on an height, and surrounded by the waters of the Nile, was conveniently situated for the trade of the Red Sea. Strabo (*m*) thus describes it:  
 “ A canal, cut from the Nile, runs to  
 “ Cophtos, which is inhabited by Egyp-  
 “ tians and Arabs. Ptolemy Philadelphus  
 “ was the first who made a road between  
 “ this city and Berenice, across the desert  
 “ without water, where he built public edi-  
 “ fices, in which travellers, foot and horse,

(*l*) The Arabs, having no *p* in their language, use the *b*, instead, and call it Cöbt.

(*m*) Strabo, lib. 17.

“ might find accommodations. The danger  
 “ of navigating the farther and narrow part  
 “ of the Red Sea occasioned him to execute  
 “ this work, the consequent advantages of  
 “ which demonstrate its utility. The pro-  
 “ ductions of Arabia, India, and Ethiopia,  
 “ were soon brought over the Arabian Gulph  
 “ to Cophtos, which city is still the store-  
 “ house of the merchants of the East. They  
 “ no longer unladed at Berenice, where the  
 “ coast is shallow and unsafe, but at the port  
 “ of the Rat (*n*), which is not far distant,  
 “ and where shipping is kept; formerly  
 “ this road was travelled by night, on ca-  
 “ mels, and travellers steered their course,  
 “ like mariners, by observing the stars; they  
 C 2 “ were

(*n*) Thus called by the Greeks and Romans, because it  
 is very small. The Arabic name, Cossair, small, pre-  
 serves the meaning of its ancient title. This passage wants  
 explanation. Strabo places Berenice at some distance  
 from the port of the Rat, now Cossair; Ptolemy and Pliny  
 under the tropic, that is fifty leagues more to the south.  
 It must therefore have been eleven or twelve days journey,  
 at least, between Cophtos and Berenice. Strabo only calls  
 it seven. This historian, who never performed the jour-  
 ney, but contented himself with such information as he  
 could obtain, at a time when the ancient road was no  
 longer travelled, must certainly have been deceived. Con-  
 suit

“ were also obliged to provide themselves  
 “ with provisions and water sufficient for six  
 “ or seven days journey ; but at present they  
 “ obtain water from deep wells and cisterns  
 “ constructed for that purpose. Mines of  
 “ emeralds are found in the isthmus they  
 “ cross, and other precious stones, which  
 “ the Arabs search after.”

The riches Cophtos acquired from its Indian commerce, rendered it exceedingly flourishing ; the city became celebrated, and its prosperity continued till the time of Dioclesian. The inhabitants having embraced Christianity at that period, being persecuted by the Emperor, revolted ; he sent an army to quell them, and their city was entirely rased. In the time of Abulfeda, its splendour was gone, and nothing remained but a small place built among the ruins of the former city. At present, the inhabitants have wholly deserted it, and have retired to a village a mile distant, which they have named

sult the most learned geographers, and there can be no doubt but that Berenice was situated on the borders of the Red Sea, and under the parallel of Syene. Father Sicard, and various other travellers, have supposed Cossair was the ancient Berenice. They were mistaken.

Cobt.

Cobt. The marbles and noble fragments scattered among the sands, which cover the scite of the ancient Cophtos, attest the barbarism of Dioclesian. The great bason, which was the ancient harbour, still subsists, with two bridges thrown over canals which run by its side.

Cous, formerly the city of Apollo, was enriched by the destruction of Cophtos, whose merchants, establishing themselves there, caused commerce long to flourish, as we are informed by Abulfeda (c). “Cous, “situated on the eastern bank of the Nile, is “the largest city in Egypt, except Fostat; “and the storehouse of the merchandize of “Aden, which is first brought to Cossair, “and afterwards to Cous, by a three days “journey over the desert.”

This city, as well as Cophtos, owed its rise to the commerce of India, and enjoyed great opulence while under the Arabian government, but since the Turks have seized

(c) Abulfeda, Description of Egypt. In the thirteenth century, Aden was the most flourishing city of Yemen, and traded both with India and Egypt. Golius and other writers have said the ruins of Thebes were at Cous. This was an error.

on Egypt, and appointed a Pacha, who, with four-and-twenty Beys, prey on this fine country, -Cous has undergone the same fate as her rivals; her trade is ruined by the oppressions of government, her glory eclipsed, and her buildings reduced to a few huts inhabited by a small number of Copts and Arabs. Giena, which has replaced these two cities, retains nothing of their magnificence. Neither the advantage of situation, nor the fertility of the neighbouring country, can preponderate against the despotism of Egyptian government, and the hostile pillages of the Bedouins.

Having spoken of these ancient cities, Sir, it will be necessary to describe this part of Egypt, which is so little known, yet so interesting. Please to examine the map, and you will see the Nile, a fugitive from the latter cataract, bending its course towards Lybia, in the same direction with the mountains. Soon repelled by insurmountable obstacles, it turns eastward, and approaches the Red Sea. The interval which separates them being only three-and-thirty leagues, which was the reason why Strabo called it an isthmus. At the two extremes of this  
Isthmus

isthmus stand Giena and Cossair, between which is a deep valley, where traces of the sea may be found at every step, but which, though barren and destitute of verdure, is very passable. In this valley, water, and a species of the Acacia, named Naboul, which produces gum arabic, are found. The Arabs chew this shrub, no doubt, to quench their thirst. The mines of emeralds and precious metals, which the ancient writers mention (*p*), and which formerly were one principal source of the wealth of Egypt, still subsist among the mountains, beside the road; but the ignorance of the modern Egyptians, and the fear of exposing themselves to the oppressions of the Beys, prevent these mines from being worked.

The port of Cossair is small, and can only be entered by large boats; the shipping are obliged to remain in the road, where they find good anchorage, which occasioned the Greeks and Romans to keep their navy there. The town, or rather the village, only contains at present about two hundred mud-walled cottages, and is commanded by

(*p*) Pliny, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus.



a castle, flanked with four towers, the fire of which would be sufficient to defend itself and the shipping of the port; but it is suffered to fall in ruins, and its whole garrison is a porter, whose employment it is to open and shut an old iron gate. The inhabitants are a mixture of Turks and Arabs, governed by a Cachef, who is dependant on the governor of Giena. The enormous duties of ten per cent. which are paid in kind, by all merchandize landed at Coifeir, is no encouragement to trade. Yet the tyranny of the Beys, the oppressions of the governor, and the dread of the Bedouins, are shackles much more terrible. Notwithstanding which, the situation of this port is so favourable for the interchange and vent of the productions of Egypt, Arabia, and India, that, though this commerce is much diminished, it still subsists. Any powerful maritime nation might remove these obstacles at a small expence, and ascertain prodigious profits, from this important trade; but these must depend on the means employed.

M. Chevalier, Commandant General of the French establishments in Bengal, has lately arrived at Grand Cairo, by the way of  
of

of Cossair; and I imagine, Sir, you will not be displeased to learn by what means a Frenchman could protect himself from Turks and Arabs, equally desirous to share his spoils. He has shewn me his journal, which will teach us the proper mode of traversing these deserts. His vessel having been struck by lightning on the coast of Malabar, and afterwards dismasted off Gedda, he was obliged to land at this port, and this accident caused him to lose the proper season of gaining Suez; he must either wait for the next monsoon, or venture, with small vessels, on a tempestuous sea; and this, dangerous as it was, his zeal to serve his country made him determine to undertake. After combating three months against contrary winds, and being repeatedly in danger of perishing, he reached Cossair, which place he left in a few days, in company with six Europeans, mounted on camels. They traversed the long valley which crosses the isthmus, the bottom of which is level, covered with sand, and petrified shells. This valley is by turns narrow and spacious; here bordered by mountains, from the sides of which the winter torrents tear rocky fragments of granite,

granite, jasper, alabaster, and porphyry; and there by sandy hills, on which not a shrub can be seen. The sun is eternally darting his burning rays on these sands and naked rocks, which reflect a light injurious to the eyes, and a heat almost too excessive for man or beast to endure. M. Chevalier and his companions performed this journey in the month of July, during which not even night could afford them any ease; for, the wind ceasing to blow, the succeeding calm left them exposed to the suffocating exhalations of the scorching sands, which were the only bed they had to repose upon. Amid these sufferings, a little dough, half baked in the ashes, was their sole food, and their drink water, which having been carried several hours in skins, rubbed over with an infectious oil, had contracted a finell and taste wholly insupportable. To these evils add a continual dread of being plundered by the Arabs, and the necessity of watching all night, and you will have some idea of what a man of fortitude is capable of enduring. M. Chevalier had foreseen all that might happen. His camels were tied to each other, that they might not separate in case of  
an

an attack. One of them was loaded with two small cannons, and the whole company, provided with double-barrelled guns, sabres, and pistols, were continually under arms. They encamped themselves every night, and the camel-drivers were forbidden, on peril of their lives, to approach. The Europeans mounted guard, in turn, while the others took some little repose. They were indebted for their safety to these wise precautions; for, on the third day, sixty Arabs approached to attack them. At the very first fire, the guides, who acted in concert with the robbers, fled among the rocks, but the French, with their chief at their head, advanced in good order, and employed their little artillery with success. The Bedouins, after standing some well-directed discharges, fled behind the mountains; and though they returned several times to the charge, during the route, the vigilance, dauntless behaviour, and fire-arms of the Europeans, drove the enemy as often back, whose intention was to pillage, not to fight.

At last, after a march of four days and a half, they arrived at Giena, parched by the sun, thirsty to excess, and half dead with  
hunger

hunger and lassitude; but, having bathed in the waters of the Nile, fed on the delicious fruits which grow on its banks, and recruited exhausted nature with the productions of the teeming fields it fertilizes, they felt a change, a renovation, a happiness, the inexpressible delight of which the traveller, only, who has crossed these deserts, can imagine

A disaster, which has lately happened, testifies the prudence of M. Chevalier's conduct. About the same time that he departed from Cossair, a rich caravan, the lading of which appertained to the English, was attacked between Suez and Grand Cairo. Several Europeans were present; but, to avoid the labour of carrying their arms, they had tied them on the backs of the camels; besides which, they marched at a distance from each other, and without precaution, depending upon the assurances of the Beys, which occasioned their ruin. The Bedouins fell unexpectedly upon them, without giving them time to put themselves on the defensive, seized their wealth, and killed many of them. M. de St. Germain had the misfortune to lose a beloved brother, and two-thirds of his fortune,

fortune, in this fatal rencontre. After wandering three days and nights in that barren wilderness, naked, without food, without water, and almost without hope, he arrived, half dead, at the hut of an Arab, who washed him with fresh water, fed him with milk, cloathed, and conducted him to Grand Cairo. I had this relation from his own mouth: he is now on his return to France, where, probably, his misfortunes will interest and incite the compassion of government.

The inconveniences of the road from Cossair are not so great during winter; the heats being much less. The fear of robbers is then the greatest obstacle; but, if travellers go in a body, they may secure themselves from their attacks. Even during summer, if proper care be taken to have a supply of provisions and water, in jars, or skins, not rubbed with rancid oil, people who are accustomed to these climates perform this journey with tolerable ease. Did the four-and-twenty tyrants, who devour the riches of Egypt, think but a moment on the happiness of the inhabitants, they would cause three public edifices to be built, where the  
caravans

caravans might find rest and refreshment; but their whole ambition is the unbounded gratification of their passions, a reign of a few days, and the mutual destruction of each other. In the short space of three years, I have beheld eleven pass from the excess of voluptuousness to the grave; perishing by the sword of their rivals, whom a similar fate attends. A still greater number have escaped by flight. What then have agriculture and commerce to expect under such a government? Were Egypt subjected by an enlightened people, the route to Cossair would be safe and commodious. I even suppose it possible to turn an arm of the Nile into this deep valley, over which the sea formerly flowed. Such a canal appears not more difficult than that which Amrou cut between Fostat and Colseum, and would be much more advantageous, since it would abridge the voyage of the Indian shipping a hundred leagues, and through a perilous ocean, across the farther and narrow part of the Red Sea. The cloths of Bengal, the perfumes of Yemen, and the gold dust of Abyssinia, would soon be seen at Cossair; and the corn, linen, and various productions

productions of Egypt, given in return. A nation friendly to the arts, would soon render this fine country once more the centre of the commerce of the world, the point which should unite Europe to Asia. While one part of the shipping were navigating the Arabian Gulph, and sailing to India, another would swarm upon the Mediterranean sea, and Alexandria should again revive from its ashes. An observatory, built where the sky is always serene, would likewise add to the progress of astronomy; and this happy country should a second time become the abode of the sciences, and the most delicious the earth contains. These, Sir, are not chimerical projects. The situation of Egypt is the most advantageous man can imagine: it communicates with the eastern and the western ocean. Nature has been profusely kind; nor is any thing wanting, but a people worthy to inhabit it, in order to raise it to the highest degree of power and glory.



## L E T T E R III.

THE ROUTE FROM COUS TO THEBES.  
THE EASTERN PART OF THE LATTER  
DESCRIBED.

*A description of Thebes from Diodorus Siculus and Strabo. State of that city under the Persians, Roman and Turkish Emperors. The porticos, Sphinx-avenues, edifices, and ruins of the great temple, near Carnac, in the eastern part of Thebes, which building and ruins are half a league in circumference. The plain of Carnac, leading to Luxor, which formerly was covered with houses, cultivated at present. The remains of the temple of Luxor, and the magnificent obelisks, which are the most beautiful in Egypt, or the whole world, described.*

Grand Cairo.

GOING from Cous towards Assouan, we leave the town of Nequada on the right. The Mahometans have several mosques, and a Coptic bishop resides there. The island of Matara is very near it, and two leagues further we discover the ruins of Thebes, the  
magnificence

magnificence of which poets and historians have alike been eager to describe. Citations from the ancients, who saw this city, will give you, Sir, an idea of what it formerly was; and an exact account of the monuments, still in being, will enable you to judge what degree of credit those recitals deserve. The dotted line in the map, passing by Carnac, Luxor, Medinet-Abou, and Gournou, will indicate what the extent was of this once famous city.

“ The great Diospolis,” says Diodorus Siculus (*q*), “ which the Greeks have named Thebes, was six leagues in circumference. Bufiris, who founded it, adorned it with magnificent edifices and presents. The fame of its power and wealth, celebrated by Homer, has filled the world. Its gates, and the numerous vestibules of its temples, occasioned this poet to give it the name of Hecatompylis. Never was there city that received so many offerings, in silver, gold, ivory, colossal statues and obelisks, each cut from a single stone. Four principal temples are especially ad-

(*q*) Lib. I.

“ mired there, the most ancient of which  
 “ was surprisingly grand and sumptuous. It  
 “ was thirteen stadia in circumference (*r*),  
 “ and surrounded by walls, twenty-four feet in  
 “ thickness, and forty-five cubits high. The  
 “ riches and workmanship of its ornaments  
 “ were correspondent to the majesty of the  
 “ building, which many kings contributed  
 “ to embellish. The temple still is stand-  
 “ ing, but it was stripped of its silver, gold,  
 “ ivory, and precious stones, when Cam-  
 “ byses set fire to all the temples of E-  
 “ gypt.”

I have only quoted the principal facts  
 which that historian writes concerning the  
 flourishing state of Thebes, they being suf-  
 ficient to convey an idea of its beauty ;  
 what I shall cite from Strabo will give a  
 picture of its decline, such as it was eigh-  
 teen centuries ago.

“ Thebes, or Diospolis, presents only re-  
 “ mains of its former grandeur, dispers-  
 “ ed over a space eighty stadia in length.

(*r*) Diodorus Siculus includes the sphinx-avenues,  
 and the porticos, edifices, and courts which are built  
 round the temple, properly so called ; and we shall find he  
 was very near the truth.

“ Here

“ Here are found a great number of tem-  
 “ ples, in part destroyed by Cambyſes : its  
 “ inhabitants have retired to ſmall towns,  
 “ eaſt of the Nile, where the preſent city is  
 “ built ; and to the weſtern ſhore, near  
 “ Memnonium (*s*), at which place we ad-  
 “ mire two coloffal ſtone figures, ſtanding  
 “ on each ſide ; the one entire, the other in  
 “ part thrown down, it has been ſaid, by an  
 “ earthquake (*t*). There is a popular opi-  
 “ nion that the remaining part of this ſta-  
 “ tue, towards the baſe, utters a ſound  
 “ once a day. Curioſity leading me to ex-  
 “ amine the fact, I went thither with *Ælius*  
 “ Gallus, who was accompanied by his  
 “ numerous friends, and an eſcort of ſoldiers.  
 “ I heard a ſound, about fix o’clock in the  
 “ morning, but dare not affirm whether it  
 “ proceeded from the baſe, from the coloffus,  
 “ or had been produced by ſome perſon pre-  
 “ ſent ; for one is rather inclined to ſuppoſe  
 “ a thouſand different cauſes, than that it

(*s*) Strabo calls the temple, near which was the ſtatue of Memnon, Memnonium.

(*t*) Strabo is the only ancient writer who attributes the fall of this coloffus to an earthquake ; the reſt all ſay it was thrown down by order of Cambyſes.

“ should be the effect of a certain assemblage  
 “ of stones. Beyond Memnonium are the  
 “ tombs of the Kings, hewn out of the  
 “ rock. There are about forty, made after  
 “ a marvellous manner, and worthy the at-  
 “ tention of travellers: near them are obe-  
 “ lisks, bearing various inscriptions, de-  
 “ scriptive of the wealth, power, and exten-  
 “ sive empire, of those sovereigns, who reign-  
 “ ed over Scythia, Bactriana, India, and what  
 “ is now called Ionia. *They all* recount the  
 “ various tributes those kings had exacted,  
 “ and the number of their troops, which  
 “ amounted to a million of men.”

Before I tell you, Sir, how many of the  
 monuments, described by these historians,  
 still exist, it is necessary to inform you of  
 the distribution of the ornaments, vestibules,  
 courts, and edifices of the Egyptian tem-  
 ples, lest we should lose ourselves amidst  
 their ruins.

“ In front of each of the temples of Egypt  
 “ is a paved avenue, a hundred feet wide, and  
 “ three or four hundred in length. Two rows  
 “ of sphinxes, twenty cubits or more distant  
 “ from each other, adorned the sides of these  
 “ avenues, at the end of which porticos were  
 “ built,

“ built, but not in any fixed number. These  
 “ porticos lead to a magnificent open space,  
 “ which fronts the temple. Beyond is the  
 “ sanctuary, which is smaller, and in which  
 “ no human figures are ever sculptured, and  
 “ very seldom those of animals. Walls,  
 “ of an equal height with the temple, form  
 “ the sides of this open space. These walls  
 “ run in diverging lines, and are widest at  
 “ the end farthest from the temple by fifty  
 “ or sixty cubits. They abound in sculptured  
 “ figures, after the manner of the ancient  
 “ Greek and Etruscan works. There is usual-  
 “ ly a spacious edifice, supported by a pro-  
 “ digious number of columns, beside these  
 “ temples (*u*).” Having nothing to con-  
 sult but monuments mutilated, by men or  
 by time, I hope the above description will  
 supply the imperfection of mine. Thus  
 guided, let us advance to the south of Car-  
 nak, where we find the remains of one of the  
 four principal temples mentioned by Diodo-  
 rus Siculus. Here are eight entrances, three of  
 which have each a Sphinx, of enormous size,  
 standing in front; with two colossal statues,  
 on each side the sphinx, which are each cut

(*u*) Strabo, lib. 17.

from a single block of marble, in the antique taste. Crossing these majestic avenues, we come to four porticos, each thirty feet wide, fifty-two in height, and one hundred and fifty in length. The entrance to these is thro' pyramidal gates, and the cieling is formed of stones of an astonishing size, supported by the two walls.

The first of these porticos is entirely of red granite, perfectly polished. Without are four rows of hieroglyphics, within only three. On each of the latter, I remarked two human figures, larger than life, and sculptured with great art. Colossal figures, rising fifteen feet above the bottom of the door, decorate its sides; without are two statues, thirty-three feet high, the one of red granite, the other spotted with black and grey; and within is another, of a single block of marble, wanting the head, each bearing a kind of cross in its hand, that is to say, a *phallus*, which, among the Egyptians, was the symbol of fertility.

The second portico is half destroyed; the gate has only two rows of hieroglyphics, of gigantic size, one towards the south, the other towards the north. Each front of the  
third

third portico is covered with hieroglyphics of colossal figures, and at the entrance of the gate are the remains of a statue of white marble, the trunk of which is fifteen feet in circumference, and wearing a helmet, round which a serpent is twined. The fourth portico is little more than walls, almost entirely destroyed, and heaps of rubbish, among which are parts of a colossus, of red granite, the body of which is thirty feet round.

Beyond these porticos the high walls, which form the first court of the temple, began. The people entered at twelve gates; several are destroyed, and others very ruinous. That which has suffered least from time, and the outrages of barbarians, faces the west. Before it is a long sphinx avenue. The dimensions of this gate are forty feet in width, sixty high, and forty-eight thick, at the foundation. In the front are two rows of small windows, and the remains of steps in its sides, leading to its summit. This gate, so massy as to appear indestructible, is in the rustic stile, without hieroglyphics, and magnificent in simplicity. Through this we enter the great court, on two of the sides of which are terraces, eighty feet in width, and



raised six feet above the ground. Along these run two beautiful colonnades. Beyond is the second court, which leads to the temple, and, by its extent, equals the majesty of the building. It is likewise embellished by a double colonnade; each column is above fifty feet high, and eighteen in circumference at the base. Their capitals are in the form of a vase, over which a square stone is laid, which probably served as a pedestal for statues. Two prodigious colossal figures, mutilated by violence, terminate these colonnades. Standing at this place, the astonished eye surveys the temple, the height of which is most surprising, in all its immensity. Its walls of marble appear everlasting. Its roof, which rises in the center, is sustained by eighteen rows of columns. Those standing under the most lofty part are thirty feet in circumference, and eighty in height: the others are one third less. The world does not contain a building the character and grandeur of which more forcibly impress awe and majesty: it seems adequate to the high idea the Egyptians had formed of the Supreme Being; nor can it be entered, or beheld, but with reverence. Its sides, both within

within and without, are loaded with hieroglyphics, and extraordinary figures. On the northern wall are representations of battles, with horses and chariots, one of which is drawn by flags. On the southern are two barks, with canopies, at the end of which the sun appears; the mariners guide them with poles; two men, seated at the stern, seem to direct their proceedings, and receive their homage. These are allegoric designs. In the poetic language of the Greeks, the sun was painted in a car, drawn by horses, guided by Apollo. The Egyptians represent it on board a ship, conducted by Osiris, and seven mariners, who represent the planets. (x)

The entrance, which fronted the temple of Luxor, is greatly decayed; but, if we may judge by the obelisks that remain, it must have been most sumptuous. There are two of sixty feet high, and twenty-one in circumference at the base; and, a little farther, two others, of seventy-two feet in height, and thirty in circumference. Each of these superb monuments is formed from a single block of red granite, and does honor to the genius and

(x) Macrobius Somn. Scipionis. Mart. Capella, lib. 2.

science of the antient Egyptians. There are hieroglyphics, in various divisions, engraved on these obelisks, three of which remain standing, and the other is thrown down.

Proceeding eastward from the great temple, after crossing heaps of rubbish, we come to a building, called, by Strabo, the Sanctuary, which is small. The gate is ornamented with columns, three of which are grouped, and united under one sole capital. Within are various apartments of granite. Here the virgin consecrated to Jupiter was kept, and who offered herself in sacrifice after a very extraordinary manner. (*y*)

I have only described those parts of the temple, Sir, which are in best preservation. Within its vast limits are several edifices, almost destroyed, which, no doubt, appertained to the priests and sacred animals. Near the ruins is a large expanse of water; and we meet, at every step, with remains of columns,

(*y*) Jovi quem præcipuè colunt (Thebani) virgo quædam genere clarissima et specie pulcherrima sacratur; quales Græci Pallacas vocant. Ea pellicis more cum quibus vult coit usque ad naturalem corporis purgationem. Post purgationem, vero, viro datur; sed priusquam nubat, post pellicatus tempus, in mortuæ morem lugetur. Strabo, lib. 17.

sphinxes,

sphinxes, statues, colossal figures, and ruins, so magnificent that the imagination is kept in continual admiration and amazement. Were the ground, occupied by the various entrances, porticos, and courts, appertaining to the temple, measured, we should find the whole was, at least, half a league in circumference; and that Diodorus Siculus was not deceived, when he allowed it that extent.

The plain, lying between Carnac and Luxor, is not less than a league in length, and was once covered with the houses of the Egyptians, who lived in that eastern part of Thebes. Though, according to Diodorus Siculus (*z*), they were five stories high, and solidly built, they have not been able to resist the ravages of time and conquerors, but are totally destroyed (*a*). The ground is at present much raised, by the annual floodings

(*z*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. i.

(*a*) Pocock, deceived by this total destruction, imagined Thebes formerly contained no great buildings, except the temples, and that the inhabitants there lived in huts, or tents, &c. The testimony of Diodorus Siculus refutes this assertion.

of the river, which has covered it with several feet of mud, and the ruins are below the surface. Corn, flax, and vegetables, grow in the very places where, three thousand years ago, public squares, palaces, and numerous edifices, were the admiration of the enlightened people who inhabited them. At the farther end of this plain is the village of Luxor, near which are the avenues and remains of another temple, still more ruinous than the first. Its extent is spacious, and so are its courts, which are entered under porticos supported by columns forty feet high, without estimating the base, buried under the sand. Pyramidal majestic gates, abounding in hieroglyphics; the remains of walls built with flags of granite, and which the barbarity of men only could overturn; rows of colossal marble figures, forty feet high, one third buried in the ground; all declare what the magnificence of the principal edifice, the site of which is known by a hill of ruins, must have been. But nothing can give a more sublime idea of its grandeur than the two obelisks, by which it was embellished, and which seem to have been placed there  
by

by giants, or the Genii of fable. They are each a solid block of granite, seventy-two feet high, above the surface, and thirty-two in circumference; but, being sunk deep in the sand and mud, they may well be supposed ninety feet from the base to the summit. The one is split, towards the middle; the other perfectly preserved. The hieroglyphics they contain, divided into columns, and cut in bas-relief projecting an inch and a half, do honour to the sculptor; the hardness of the stone has preserved them from being injured by the air. Nothing can be more majestic than these obelisks. Egypt is the sole country in the world where men have performed works like these; yet there is not a city on the face of the globe where they would not become its grandest ornament.

Such, Sir, are the most remarkable monuments found at present, on the eastern side of Thebes. Their very aspect would awaken the genius of a polished nation, but the Turks and Copts, crushed to dust beneath an iron sceptre, behold them without astonishment, and build huts, which scarcely can screen them from the sun, in their neighbourhood.

These

These barbarians, if they want a mill-stone, do not blush to overturn a column, the support of a temple or portico, and saw it in pieces. Thus abject does despotism render men!

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R   I V .

## THE WESTERN PART OF THEBES DESCRIBED.

*A visit to the tombs of the Kings of Thebes, dug in the mountain, through subterranean passages. Sarcophagi, galleries, and hieroglyphics described. Observations on the grand temple, the roof of which was supported by square pillars, bearing statues. Parts of a prodigious colossal figure found among these ruins. The ruins of Memnonium, denoted by heaps of marble, and rows of statues, either mutilated or sunk a third of their height in the earth, and particularly by the celebrated colossal figure of Memnon, famous among the antients for the sounds it articulated at sun-rising.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE villages of Gournou and Medinet-Abou, built where the western part of Thebes once stood, are surrounded by grand ruins. One league westward of the first are the



grottos named *Biban Elmelsuk*, the gates of the Kings ; where are seen the tombs of the ancient monarchs of the Thebais. The road to them is strewn with marbles and fragments, and we arrive at them by a winding narrow pass, the sides of which, in various places, have been hollowed out. Large excavations have been made in the rock, which were antecedent to the building of houses and palaces. The valley widens at the farther end, about two hundred fathoms, and here, at the foot of the mountain, are the passages which lead to the tombs. Strabo counts forty of them (*b*), Diodorus Siculus forty-seven (*c*) ; but he adds that, in the time of Augustus, seventeen only remained, some of which were very much damaged. At present most of them are closed up, and nine of them only can be entered. The subterranean galleries leading to them, are in general ten feet high, and as many in breadth. The walls and roofs, cut in a white rock, preserve the brilliant polish of stucco. At the far end of four principal alleys, longer and higher than the rest, is the door of a large hall, in the centre of which a marble

(*b*) Strabo, lib. 17.—(*c*) Diod. Siculus.

tomb is seen, on the top of which a figure is sculptured, in basso-relievo, and another holding a sceptre in one hand, on the wall; a third, also, on the cieling, bearing a sceptre, with wings descending as low as his heels.

The second grotto is spacious, and much embellished, containing, on the cieling, numerous golden stars; birds painted in colours which seem to have lost nothing of their freshness and brilliancy; and hieroglyphics divided in columns, and engraved in the walls. Two men are seated beside the gate, the passage to which is a long gentle declivity. A block of red granite, sixteen feet high, ten long, and six wide, forms the sarcophagus of the king, who is sculptured in basso-relievo on the top of the tomb, and surrounded by a hieroglyphical inscription. Niches cut out of the rock, probably, served as repositories for the mummies of the royal family. . The tombs, erected in other apartments, have been carried away by force, as their fragments attest. There is one exceedingly fine grotto, which contains only a marble lid, ten feet long and six wide; and in the farther part of the most distant ca-

vern is a human figure, in basso-relievo, with the arms crossing the breast, and two others, kneeling, one on each side.

These galleries and subterranean apartments which go very far under the mountains, and a very small part, only, of which I have described, are embellished by marble figures of men, birds, and various animals; some sculptured in basso-relievo, others cut hollow, and some painted in colours which are not to be effaced. These unintelligible characters, which contain the history of the times, conceal, beneath their impenetrable veil, most interesting discoveries, and the most remarkable facts relative to the monarchs of the Thebais, whose power extended as far as India. Torches are necessary in examining these labyrinths, into which the light of day cannot penetrate. Such, Sir, are the caverns where the bodies of kings repose, surrounded by silence and shades. A kind of religious terror is felt while wandering through them; as if the presence of the living disturbed the dead, in the asylums where they have retired to rest, in peaceful sleep.

Returning from these dark abodes, and proceeding south-east, the traveller soon meets

with

with the remains of a temple, on the square pillars of which are statues, that all have had their heads broken off, holding a sceptre in one hand, and a whip in the other. This edifice is little more than a mountain of ruins. On the south side is a pyramidal gate, which was the entrance to a portico. The extent of the courts round the temple is denoted by fragments of columns, and stones of an incredible grandeur. In one of these courts are parts of two statues, of black marble, which were thirty feet high: in the other, one stands in stupid amazement, at beholding a colossal figure, extended on the ground, and broken near the middle. The space between the shoulders is one and twenty feet; the head eleven feet in length, and eighteen in circumference. This gigantic statue is only inferior in size to that of Memnon. The remains of the buildings appertaining to this temple cover a mile of ground, and leave a high idea of its magnificence in the mind.

Proceeding onward, about half a league, we come to the ruins of Memnonium, near Medinet-Abou, where is the largest colossus of Egypt, which marks the situation of the tomb of Osymandyas, for so Diodorus Siculus

indicates. Before I describe the ruins of this famous place, permit me to cite what Diodorus has written on the subject. “ Ten  
 “ stadia from the tombs of the kings of  
 “ Thebes,” (*d*) says this historian, “ is the  
 “ admirable one of Osymandyas. The en-  
 “ trance to it is by a vestibule of various  
 “ coloured stones, two hundred feet long,  
 “ and sixty-eight high. Leaving this, we  
 “ enter a square peristyle, each side of which  
 “ is four hundred feet in length. Animals,  
 “ twenty-four feet high, cut from blocks of  
 “ granite, serve as columns, and support the  
 “ cieling, which is composed of marble slabs,  
 “ twenty-seven feet square, and embellished  
 “ throughout by golden stars, glittering on  
 “ a ground of azure. Beyond this peristyle  
 “ is another entrance, and after that a ves-  
 “ tibule, built like the first, but containing  
 “ many sculptures of all kinds. At the

(*d*) Diod. Siculus, lib. 1. The great caverns, where the tombs of the kings of Thebes may be seen, are only three quarters of a league from Medinet-Abou; therefore, Diodorus is tolerably exact, since, at most, he is not deceived above a quarter of a league. Pocock has committed a more considerable error in placing the tomb of Osymandyas at Luxor, on the other side the Nile.

“ entrance

“ entrance are three statues, formed from a  
 “ single stone, by Memnon Sycnite, the  
 “ principal of which, representing the king,  
 “ is seated, and is the largest in Egypt. One  
 “ of its feet, exactly measured, is above seven  
 “ cubits. The other two figures, supported  
 “ on his knees, the one on the right, the  
 “ other on the left, are those of his mother  
 “ and daughter. The whole work is less  
 “ valuable for its enormous grandeur than  
 “ for the beauty of the sculpture, and the  
 “ choice of the granite, which, though so  
 “ extensive, has neither flaw, nor blemish,  
 “ on its surface. The colossus bears this in-  
 “ scription, *I am Osymandias, king of kings:*  
 “ *he who would comprehend my greatness,*  
 “ *and where I rest, let him destroy some one*  
 “ *of these works (c).* Besides this is another  
 “ statue of his mother, cut from a single  
 “ block of granite, thirty feet high. Three  
 “ queens are sculptured on her head, inti-  
 “ mating that she was daughter, wife and  
 “ mother of a king.

(c) I believe this inscription was fatal to the colossus, and occasioned Cambyles to break it in two.

The French reads, *que l'on détruise*; the Greek, *νικάτω* *αὐτὸν ὁ νικῶν ἐγώ*, let him conquer, i. e. exceed, some of my works. T.

“ After this portico is a peristyle, still  
“ more beautiful than the first, on the stones  
“ of which is engraved the history of the  
“ war of Osymandyas, against the rebels of  
“ Bactriana. The façade of the front wall  
“ exhibits this prince attacking ramparts,  
“ at the foot of which the river flows; he  
“ is combating advanced troops, and by his  
“ side is a terrible lion, ardent in his defence.  
“ On the right wall are captives in chains,  
“ with their hands and genitals cut off, as  
“ marks of reproach for their cowardice.  
“ The wall on the left contains symbolical  
“ figures, of exceedingly good sculpture,  
“ descriptive of the triumphs and sacrifice of  
“ Osymandyas, returning from this war.  
“ In the center of the peristyle, where the  
“ roof is open, an altar was erected of a  
“ single stone, of marvellous bulk, and ex-  
“ quisite workmanship; and, at the farther  
“ wall are two colossal figures, each hewn  
“ from a single block of marble, forty feet  
“ high, seated on their pedestals. This  
“ admirable peristyle has three gates, one  
“ between the two statues, and the others  
“ on each side. These lead to an edifice two  
“ hundred feet square, the roof of which  
“ is

“ is supported by high columns. It resem-  
 “ bles a magnificent theatre. Several figures,  
 “ carved in wood, represent a tribunal ad-  
 “ ministering justice. Thirty judges are seen  
 “ on one of the walls, and in the midst of  
 “ them the chief justice, with a pile of  
 “ books at his feet, and a figure of Truth,  
 “ with her eyes shut, suspended from his  
 “ neck.

“ Beyond is a walk, surrounded by edi-  
 “ fices of various forms, in which were  
 “ tables stored with all kinds of most deli-  
 “ cious viands. In one of these, Osyman-  
 “ dyas, cloathed in magnificent robes, offers  
 “ up the gold and silver, which he annually  
 “ drew from the mines of Egypt to the  
 “ gods. Beneath, the amount of this reve-  
 “ nue, which was thirty-two million minas  
 “ of silver, was inscribed. Another building  
 “ contained the sacred library, at the entrance  
 “ of which these words were read, *PHYSIC*  
 “ *FOR THE SOUL*. A fourth contained all  
 “ the deities of Egypt, with the king, offer-  
 “ ing suitable presents to each, and calling  
 “ Osiris, and the surrounding divinities, to  
 “ witness he had exercised piety toward the  
 “ gods, and justice toward men. Beside



“ the library stood one of the finest of these  
“ edifices, and in it twenty couches, to re-  
“ cline on, while feasting ; also the statues  
“ of Jupiter, Juno, and Osymandyas, whose  
“ body, it is supposed, was deposited here.  
“ Various adjoining apartments contained  
“ representations of all the consecrated ani-  
“ mals of Egypt. Hence was the ascent to  
“ the sepulchre of the king, on the summit  
“ of which was placed a circle of gold, in  
“ thickness one cubit, and three hundred  
“ and sixty-five in circumference ; each  
“ cubit corresponded to a day in the year,  
“ and on it were engraved the rising and  
“ setting of the stars, for that day, with  
“ such astrological indications as the super-  
“ stition of the Egyptians had affixed to  
“ them. Cambyfes is said to have carried  
“ off this circle, when he ravaged Egypt.  
“ Such, according to historians, was the  
“ tomb of Osymandyas, which surpassed all  
“ others, as well by its wealth as by the  
“ workmanship of the skilful artists em-  
“ ployed.” (\*)

(\*) Some very slight deviations from the French text have been made on the authority of Diodorus. T.

I dare not, Sir, warrant all that Diodorus Siculus advances, on the faith of preceding writers; for, in his time, the greatest part of these edifices were no longer in existence. Nay, I confess that, in any other country, such marvellous edifices would pass for mere chimæras; but in this land of fecundity, which seems to have been first honoured by the creative genius of the arts, they acquire probability. Let us examine the remains of those monuments, and our eyes will oblige us to believe in miracles. These remains are heaped together near Medinet-Abou (*f*), in the circumference of about half a league. The temple, vestibules, and peristyles, present only piles of ruins, among which some pyramidal gates rear their heads, whose solidity has rendered them indestructible; but the numerous colossal figures, described by Diodorus, though mutilated, still subsist. That nearest the ruins, which is of yellow marble, is sunk in the earth, one third of its height. On a line with it is another of spotted marble, black and white, thirty feet

(*f*) Medinet-Abou signifies the city of the father. That Memnonium stood here cannot be doubted, since it is also called, in the Itinerary, *Papa*, or Father.

long.

long, with many hieroglyphics sculptured on its back. In the space between them, the ground is covered with fragments of columns, and broken statues, denoting the arrangement of the vestibules. Beyond are two other colossal statues, totally disfigured, and a hundred fathom still further, the traveller is struck with astonishment at the sight of two gigantic figures, which seem like rocks, and are seated beside each other. Their pedestals are nearly equal, and formed from blocks of granite, thirty feet long, and eighteen wide. The smallest of these statues is, also, one sole stone; the other, the largest in Egypt, is formed of five different pieces of granite, and broken in the middle. This should seem to be the statue of Osymandyas (*g*), for we find two figures, sculptured in basso-relievo, the length of his legs, and rising one third as high as himself.

(*g*) The only objection to this opinion is that, according to Diodorus Siculus, the statue of Osymandyas, with those of his mother and daughter, were all formed from one sole block; and this colossus is composed of several pieces: but the first of these pieces, reaching from the sole of the foot to the elbows, comprehends the two other figures, which, perhaps, is what the historian means to say. The remainder is conformable to his description.

These

These were the mother and daughter of this prince. The other colossus, of one single stone, corresponding to the dimensions Diodorus Siculus gives, also represented the mother of the king. You will form some idea of the gigantic size of the grand colossus, when you are told that its foot, alone, is near eleven feet long, which answers to the seven cubits of Diodorus. This statue, the half of which remains on its base, and which Strabo calls the statue of Memnon, uttered a sound at sun-rising. Its fame formerly was very great. Several writers have spoken of it with enthusiasm, regarding it as one of the seven wonders of the world. A crowd of Greek and Latin inscriptions, which are still legible on the base and legs of the colossus, attest that princes, generals, governors, and men of all conditions, have heard this miraculous sound. You know, Sir, what the judicious Strabo thought, and, I hope, you will be of his opinion. Such, Sir, are the remains of Thebes, and her hundred gates, the antiquity of which is lost in the obscurity of ages, and which still contains proofs of the perfection of the arts in those most distant times. All here is sublime,

lime, all majestic. Its kings seem to have acquired the glory of never dying, while their obelisks and colossal statues exist, and to have only laboured for immortality. They could preserve their memory against the efforts of time, but not against the barbarism of conquerors ; those most dreadful scourges of science and nations, which, in their pride, they have too often erased from the face of the earth.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R V.

THE ROUTE BETWEEN THEBES AND  
ESNA.

*A description of Armant, formerly Hermunthis, where are two antique temples, built in honour of Jupiter and Apollo, the latter in good preservation. Remarks on Okfor and its pottery; on the ancient temple near the town of Esna, in which the Turks house their cattle; and on another temple, west of that, where the Egyptians worshipped Neith, the Minerva of the Greeks: on the convent founded by St. Helena, and the cemetery of the martyrs; also on the stone baram, and its use in making kitchen utensils.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

WITH pain, 'Sir, one tears one's self from Thebes and her hundred gates (*b*). Her monuments

(*b*) I delight in this epithet, by which Homer, at a stroke, paints the grandeur of that city. It is sublime because not exaggerated. A little attention to the porticos,

monuments fix the traveller's eyes, and fill his mind with vast ideas. Beholding colossal figures and stately obelisks, which seem to surpass human powers, he says, man has done this, and feels himself and his species ennobled. True it is, when he looks down on the wretched huts, standing beside these magnificent labours, and when he perceives an ignorant people, instead of a scientific nation, he grieves for the generations that are past, and the arts that perished with them; yet this very grief has a kind of charm for the heart of sensibility.

The wind impells us toward the farthest limits of Egypt, and rocks, hewn into colossal statues, already disappear. New objects fix the attention, and the riches of the banks of the Nile are contemplated with pleasure, as we approach Armant. This village is built at the foot of an eminence,

tiqos, vestibules, peristyles, and courts, appertaining to the grand temples of Egypt, will convince us those built at Thebes had, at least, a hundred gates. I, therefore, believe, like Diodorus Siculus, that this appellation, worthy the pen of Homer, was rather suggested by the gates of the temples than the walls; for it does not even appear that this famous city ever had any walls. No historian mentions any, nor are traces of any to be found.

on which the ruins of Hermunthis are seen. That ancient city paid particular adoration to Apollo and Jupiter, and contained two temples dedicated to them. These time has respected and spared. That of Apollo is small, but in good preservation; its walls are of granite. A frieze, with hawks, a bird sacred to this god, is carried round. The platform is ascended by stairs, cut in one of the sides, and faced every way with hieroglyphics. Four rows of human figures are sculptured without, and three within. The building is divided into several apartments. Five falcons, with their wings spread, decorate the ceiling of the first; golden stars glitter on the vaulted roof of the second. In this are two rams, facing each other, with hieroglyphics, artfully sculptured. Two marble oxen (*i*) are at the extremity of this apartment, and, round it, women suckling their children. A large edifice, the foundation of which only remains, fronts the temple; beyond is a large basin, intended as a reservoir for the waters of the Nile. Farther along the bank of the river is another

(i) The ox, in Egypt, was the symbol of fertility and inundation.



edifice, which, probably, was the temple of Jupiter, now made a church of by the Christians. The plaister, on which crosses are painted, covers the hieroglyphics and Egyptian inscriptions.

Four leagues from Armant, up the country, is the village of Okfor. Abulfeda says that, in his time, much pottery was made there (*k*); and this pottery still subsists. They carry their vases to the Nile, tie them on a bed, formed by palm branches, with the mouth downwards, then put a second row on the first, in like manner disposed, and afterwards a third. This kind of raft floats supported by the air, which, included in the hollow of the vases, acts as in the diving-bell. Two men seat themselves upon and conduct them from town to town, till they have sold all their ware. I have seen several of these rafts even below Grand Cairo. Okfor stands in the midst of a plain, fertile in corn, and excellent dates.

Proceeding southward, we pass two hills, near Gebelein, at the foot of which is the tomb of a Mahometan saint, and, soon af-

(*k*) Abulfeda, Description of Egypt.

ter, discover Asfoun (*1*), a tolerably large town, built near the ruins of Aphroditopolis. From Thebes to Syene, crocodiles are frequently perceived, stretched on the sandy banks which the retiring Nile leaves dry. They sleep in the sun; but their sleep is far from sound, for they plunge into the water at the approach of boats. They seldom descend into the lower Thebais, and never below Grand Cairo. These voracious animals, though covered with almost impenetrable scales, fly places too much frequented by men, and would rather harbour towards Assouan, where boats come more seldom. According to the ancients, the ichneumon entered the jaws of this monster, while he was asleep, and devoured his entrails. The ichneumon seeks for crocodile eggs, hidden among the sands, and eats, when he can find, them. This was, perhaps, the origin of that fable.

We approach the port of Esna, Sir, a considerable town, governed by an Arab prince, and a cachef, dependant on the Bey

(*1*) This is the third city of this name; they were so called by the Greeks. When I shall speak, at the end of this volume, of the ancient religion of the country, I shall give such Egyptian names as are come down to us.

of Girga. The Mahometans have several mosques here, and the Copts a church, with two priests to perform divine service. Abulfeda says, “ Eḡna (*m*), remarkable for its public baths and trade, is built on the western bank of the Nile, between Affouan and Cous, but nearer the latter. It acknowledges, adds the geographer of Nubia, the Copts for its founders. (*n*) Its well cultivated lands abound in corn and palm-trees, and its precincts in gardens and fruit-trees. Here are several antique monuments, built by the Copts, and stately ruins.”

This description is still suitable to Eḡna, which is surrounded by rich fields, and shaded by orange groves, fertile in flowers and fruits. This city, formerly called Latopolis, adored Minerva, and the fish-latus. (*o*) It contains an antique temple, which has thick walls on three of its sides. Six large fluted columns, with capitals ornamented by palm leaves, stand in the front; eighteen others support the roof, which is composed

(*m*) Description of Egypt.

(*n*) The Arabs call the ancient Egyptians Copts.

(*o*) Strabo, lib. 17.

of huge marble slabs. A frize is carried round the building, and innumerable hieroglyphics carved on the outside. Those within, executed much more carefully, mark the degree of progress the Egyptians had made in sculpture. This temple is defiled by the dung heaps of the cattle which the Turks house in it. The barbarians do not blush to make cow-stalls of the finest monuments of antient Egypt.

Another temple stands a league west of Esna, on the walls of which a woman, seated, is sculptured in many places. (*p*) Minerva was honored here, and here the fish latus was cherished. Perhaps the columns of this temple gave the Greeks the idea of the Corinthian order. The foliage of the capitals much resembles that of the Acanthus, except that it projects less, and is sometimes only sketched. The brightness of the colouring of various animals, painted on

(*p*) This woman seated was an Egyptian divinity, called Neith, and which the antient Greeks, named (Ἀθηνᾶ) Minerva. They, in imitation of their preceptors, at first engraved and painted her seated, as we shall see in the course of these letters.

the cieling, is preserved. The Egyptians *often used gold and ultramarine blue in their paintings*; but, if we may judge by what remains of their works, they did not understand the art of shading, by which colours insensibly mingle with each other, and give objects the form and effect they possess in nature. Their colours were exceedingly brilliant, but almost always uniform, and laid on distinct from each other. South of Esna are the ruins of a monastery, founded by St. Helena, near the cæmety of the martyrs, where are tombs, under cupolas, supported by arcades. The inhabitants of Esna having revolted against the persecuting Dioclesian, he destroyed their city, and put them to the sword. This place, consecrated by religion, is become celebrated among the Copts, who go thither, on pilgrimage, from the most distant provinces of the kingdom.

Along the chain of mountains, which run east of the Nile, and almost facing Esna, are quarries which yield a soft stone, called baram, of which kitchen utensils are made. It is hardened by the fire, and makes excellent pots and saucepans, which do not  
give

give the least bad taste to the food. I shall finish this letter, Sir, by warning you that *Father Sicard and Vansleb have confounded* this place with Syene, which is situated under the tropic, thirty leagues to the south.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R VI.

THE ROUTE FROM ESNA TO THE LAST  
CATARACT.

*Edjou described, where is a temple dedicated to Apollo. The dangerous passage of Hajar Sallal. Scite of Gomm Ombo, the ancient Ombos; and remarks on the crocodiles which are, in these parts, seen in flocks. Arrival at Syene, now called Assouan. Account of that city, its monuments, solstitial well, and of the image of the sun seen in it, when at the tropic of Cancer. Of the islands of Philæ and Elephantina, with their temple and antiquities. Of the quarries of granite, west of the cataract. Retrospective view of the country between Grand Cairo and Syene.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

WE now approach, Sir, to the end of our journey. The heat, beginning to make itself felt, informs us we are near the tropic. The burning south wind blows in gusts,  
and

and raises vortexes of sand, pernicious to man and beast, who both seek shelter, the one in their caverns, the other in their huts. But happily this dangerous wind seldom continues above two days, which space of time is, sometimes, sufficient for the destruction of caravans amidst the deserts.

The country assumes another aspect. At our departure from Grand Cairo we saw the land sown; near Girga the corn was in ear, and they are reaping it here, at the end of January: such is Egypt! In traversing it, from one extremity to the other, we see the decoration of the scene sensibly change. Verdure, flowers, and harvests are in rapid succession. To progressive inundation, and the heat of the climate, must this diversity of prospect, this variety of production, thus extensively and incessantly renewed, be attributed.

Above Esna is the village of Edfou, governed by an Arabian Sheik, and built on the ruins of the great city of Apollo. Here is an antique temple, full of hieroglyphics, among which are men with the heads of falcons. The inhabitants were enemies to crocodiles. Some few leagues from Edfou, the bed of the river, enclosed between pro-



minent rocks, to the right and left, is only fifty toises in width. This place is called Hajar Salsala, the stone of the chain, and it is thought a chain was formerly stretched across the river. The rocks on the western banks are hewn into grottos. Columns, pilasters, and hieroglyphics, are seen; with a chapel cut into the hard stone. The waters, confined between the mountains, run with great rapidity, and the stream cannot be stemmed but with a favourable wind.

Passing Hajar Salsala, to the east of the Nile, is Coum Ombo, at the foot of which mount are the ruins of a temple that ascertain the scite of the ancient Ombos, where the inhabitants adored the crocodile. These animals are exceedingly common about this height, and are seen descending in herds from the sandy isles, and swim and wind among the waters. It should seem as if these dreadful reptiles had taken up their abode near the city where they received homage; but, in reality, they are more numerous here, than in other parts of Egypt, because the banks of the Nile are, here, almost deserted.

We drive near to Assouan, formerly Syene, which is to be the end of our voyage,  
and

and where I shall follow my usual plan, first citing the description the best writers of antiquity have given of these places, and, afterwards, adding an account of their present state, and the changes they have undergone. No author has better described Syene and its environs than Strabo (*q*). “ Syene is a city  
 “ of Egypt, on the confines of Ethiopia;  
 “ fronting it is the island of Elephantina,  
 “ where there is a small town, with the  
 “ temple of Cneph (*r*), and a Nilometer,  
 “ that is to say, a well (or tube) formed  
 “ out of a single stone, and placed on the  
 “ bank of the Nile, by which its degrees of  
 “ increase are measured; for the water of  
 “ this well rises and falls with the river.  
 “ Lines drawn on the walls indicate the  
 “ moment of its increase, the time when it  
 “ is highest, and the intermediate degrees.  
 “ Men, whose business it is to observe the  
 “ rising of the waters, proclaim it through-  
 “ out Egypt, that the year’s increase may  
 “ be known; for, at a certain time, they  
 “ know, by infallible signs, how high the

(*q*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*r*) An Egyptian deity, concerning which I shall hereafter speak.

“ Nile will rise, long before it begins to  
 “ overflow the lands. The governors of the  
 “ provinces are immediately informed, and  
 “ this intelligence is a guide to the husband-  
 “ man concerning the distribution of the  
 “ waters, the raising of mounds, and the  
 “ cleansing the canals. Officers appointed  
 “ to collect the tribute, proportion it to the  
 “ degree of inundation (*s*).

“ Syene stands immediately under the tro-  
 “ pic ; a well is sunk here, which marks  
 “ the summer solstice, and the day on which  
 “ it happens is known when the stile of the  
 “ sun-dial casts no shade at noon. At that  
 “ instant, the vertical sun darts his rays to  
 “ the bottom of the well, and his entire  
 “ image is described upon the water.

“ Three cohorts, quartered in this city,  
 “ guard the limits of the Roman empire.  
 “ A little below Elephantina, a rock im-  
 “ pedes the bed of the river, and forms a  
 “ small cataract. It is lower towards the  
 “ middle, so as to give passage to the wa-  
 “ ters ; but its two sides, rising perpendi-  
 “ cularly, form two navigable channels,

(*s*) Egypt, at present, pays no tribute to the Grand  
 Seigneur when the Nile does not rise to sixteen cubits.

“ which

“ which boats easily pass. The watermen  
“ venture, in their slight boats, to trust  
“ themselves to the rapid current, in the  
“ middle of the cataract, and receive no  
“ harm. Above is the isle of Philæ, which  
“ is common to Ethiopians and Egyptians :  
“ the latter live in a small town, much like  
“ that of Elephantina for size and building.  
“ It contains temples, in which the hawk  
“ of Ethiopia is held sacred.”

The island of Elephantina, Sir, is half a league long, and half as wide. The city Strabo describes no longer exists; but a small village is built on its ruins, near which is a stately gate of granite, the entrance of the portico appertaining to the temple of Cneph, of which, likewise, a building, surrounded by thick walls and rubbish, made a part. A rampart, erected at one end of the island, secured it from inundation. The Nilometer, so well placed here, to determine the first increase of the waters, and regulate the labours of agriculture, is no longer to be found. According to Strabo's description, we may suppose it was a chamber, like that of Mekias, in the island of Raouda, except that it was made from a single stone; and,  
instead

instead of a column, divided into cubits and inches, the inundation was measured by lines drawn upon the wall. This Nilometer, cut from a block of marble, has scarcely been destroyed; it is probably buried beneath the sands and mud of the Nile, whence it may be again recovered.

Four other islands surround that of Elephantina, which are nothing more than rocks of granite, from which those enormous fragments have been cut, employed in constructing the grand edifices of Egypt. From one of these was that vast cube taken, each side measuring sixty feet, in which the sanctuary at Butis was cut (*t*). Many thousand workmen, according to history, were three years employed in taking it to its place of destination. It was the most enormous weight ever moved by human power.

Affouan, built east of the Nile, is only a miserable place, with a small fort, commanded by an aga of the janissaries. The

(*t*) See Letters on Egypt, vol. I. Mr. Pocock has placed this vast stone in the temple of Minerva, at Saïs; but this is a direct contradiction of Herodotus, who describes it, and asserts he saw it at Butis, in the temple of Latona.

remains

remains of Syene are on an eminence to the south. Columns and pillars of granite, scattered here and there, denote its scite. Here is an antient edifice, with apertures at the top, and windows facing the east; perhaps; it was the observatory of the Egyptians: the solstitial well might correspond with one of its apertures, and the image of the sun be reflected from the water at the bottom. The fact, attested by all antiquity, cannot be questioned, and, while it proves the astronomical knowledge of the Egyptians, ought to be regarded as one of the finest observations ever made by man. It is very astonishing that, for the space of eighteen hundred years, no traveller has stopped at Syene, a few days before the summer solstice, to seek this wonderful well, and verify so interesting a discovery. For my own part, my fortune not being great, and having no assistance from government, I did not go so far up as this city, where it would have been necessary to have remained, at least, a week; the journey is exceedingly expensive, and there is no being safe from robbers, except by continual presents to governors, and keeping janissaries in pay; therefore, instead of writing my own obser-

observations, I have been obliged, with infinite labour, to recollect and verify those of others. It is true I have received memorandums from individuals which have been of great service to me, but it would have been much more agreeable to have examined for myself.

The cataract remains such as it was described by Strabo; the rock in the middle of the river is bare, during six months of the year, and boats ascend and descend on each side. In the time of inundation, the waters, collected between the mountains, form one sole sheet; and, flowing over the rock, have a fall of eleven feet. Boats can, then, no longer go against the stream, and their lading is obliged to be carried by land, two leagues above the cataract; though they descend as usual, and shoot the gulph like an arrow from a bow: but the vessels ought to be moderately loaded, and the men who sit at the stern should trim the boat exactly, otherwise they will be all swallowed up.

West of Assouan, a road to Philæ is cut through the mountain, in the sides of which immense quarries of granite are seen. Here Pocock observed obelisks, and columns half

formed. They were cut from the sides of the rock, and, when detached, drawn to the river, and transported on rafts to the place intended. The granite of these quarries, being spotted, red and grey, resembles the column of Alexander Severus, is very hard, and capable of being finely polished.

The Isle of Philæ, only half a league in circumference, was inhabited in common by Ethiopians and Egyptians, but is now deserted. It contains two magnificent temples, (*u*) the greatest of which has courts, embellished by colonnades. The entrance of the first is through a pyramidal gate, with an obelisk of granite on each side. The temple within is divided into several apartments, and its marble walls present various rows of hieroglyphics, among which is the hawk described by Strabo. East of this edifice is another, in the form of a parallelogram, open on all sides; the capitals of the columns, which support its roof, are well sculptured.

Here, from the confines of Egypt, let us cast a glance over the country we have so lately

(*u*) Pocock's Travels. Norden's Travels through Egypt and Nubia.



traversed. For the space of two hundred leagues, we have seen a narrow valley, bounded to the right and left by two chains of mountains and hills. This plain, in its greatest extent, except near Fayoum, is little more than ten leagues wide, but every where rich in native treasures. The pyramids, extending from the neighbourhood of Giza to Meidom, have first drawn our attention. These magnificent sepulchres, raised by the power of the Pharaohs, have not prevented us from paying our tribute of admiration to the remains of lake Mæris, dug for the happiness of the people. Advancing, we find stately porticos and temples. The ruins of Thebes, with her hundred gates, next drew our attention, and raised our thoughts high as her own monuments ; we at last approached Syene, never neglecting to remark the fine remains of antiquity we found in our route.

To what must we attribute the destruction of taste and arts, under the same climate, on the same soil, amid the same abundance ? To what but the loss of liberty ; and to government ; which, at its will, sinks or raises the genius of nations ? Egypt, become  
part

part of the Persian empire, was ravaged two hundred years by Cambyfes and his fuccessors. This barbarous prince, by destroying the temples and colleges of the priests, extinguished the sacred fire they had kindled, during past ages, in this happy climate. While held in honour, they gloriously cultivated every kind of human knowledge; despised, they lost both their science and their genius. Governed by the Ptolemies, this genius revived not; because, fixing their residence at Alexandria, those kings placed their confidence wholly in the Greeks, and disdained the Egyptians. Become a Roman province, under Augustus, Egypt was held the granary of Italy; and agriculture and commerce only were encouraged. The sovereigns of the lower empire, having embraced Christianity, governed it with a rod of iron, and overthrew some of its finest edifices. The Arabs conquered it from the bigot Heraclius, occupied by his theological disputes, and refusing to send a single ship to succour Alexandria, though the inhabitants, for the space of a year, implored his assistance. The rich library was burnt; a subject of eternal regret to the learned of all countries and all

Vol. II. G ages.

ages. An ignorant and barbarous people were its last masters ; the Turks have, as much as in them lay, annihilated commerce, agriculture, and science. After all these evils, after the revolution of so many ages, is there, Sir, a country still to be found in possession of so many antique monuments ? Can the united world produce so many ? This sole reflection will give you an idea of the people who once inhabited this country, and of the perfection to which they carried the arts.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R VII.

THE OASES, THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER  
AMMON, AND THE ROUTES TO THEM,  
DESCRIBED.

*Situation of the Oases determined by Ptolemy and the Arabian geographers. Description of these places, habitable in the midst of deserts. The journey of Alexander to the temple of Jupiter Ammon: an account of the temple, and the people near it. Destruction of the army of Cambyfes sent to pillage. The unfortunate expedition of this barbarous conqueror against the Ethiopians, and the loss of part of his army. The Oases places of exile, under the sovereigns of the lower empire, to which St. Athanasius and others were sent.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE description of Egypt, Sir, would not be compleat, were I to suffer the Oases, dependant on the Thebais, to pass unnoticed.

Strabo says (*x*), “ Africa, according to historians, and Cneius Piso, who governed it, is like the spotted skin of the leopard, and scattered over with small habitable places, which the Egyptians name Oases, surrounded by deserts.”

These remarkable places were known to the Arabian geographers, who call them Elouah. Abulfeda, their guide, describes them as follows (*y*). “ Elouah, dependant on the Saide, are a kind of islands in the midst of sands, and lie three days journey from the shores of the Nile, across the desert. Yacout enumerates three, and places them west of Upper Egypt, beyond the mountains, parallel to the river; he adds, the first is highly cultivated, has many rivulets and hot springs, with fields covered by corn, and other surprising things, but that the people there are wretched.” Here, Sir, we see the Oases of the Greeks. We partly know their distances from the Nile. Ptolemy thus fixes their latitude (*z*), the largest at

(*x*) Strabo, lib. 2.

(*y*) Description of Egypt.

(*z*) Ptol. lib. 4.

26°. 30'. under the same parallel with Abydus, which the Arabs have named *El Berbi*, the temple, on account of the edifice found there; the second at 25°. 45'. that is to say, facing Behnesa; and the most northerly at 29°. 30'. under the parallel of Lake Mæris. Let us now find near which of them the temple of Jupiter Ammon was built, and the route of Alexander will direct our search. “ Alexander having quelled Upper  
 “ Egypt(*a*), without making any alteration  
 “ in the form of government, resolved to  
 “ go to the temple of Jupiter Ammon.  
 “ The road thither is almost impracticable,  
 “ the earth is without springs, the heavens  
 “ without water. Immense sandy plains  
 “ are every where seen, which, continually  
 “ scorched by the sun’s rays, are intolerable  
 “ to the soles of the feet. A prey to  
 “ drought and heat, travellers are obliged  
 “ to cross deep sands; these, giving way at  
 “ every step, render walking exceedingly  
 “ painful. The Egyptians exaggerated these  
 “ difficulties, but nothing could stop Alexander, whose ardent desires impelled him  
 “ to visit the oracle of Jupiter. Not satis-

(*a*) Quin. Cur. lib. 4. cap. 7.

“ fied with human greatness, he believed, or  
 “ would have had others believe, the god  
 “ was his father (*b*). He and the persons  
 “ chosen to accompany him went, by wa-  
 “ ter, as far as Lake Marcotis, and depart-  
 “ ed thence to accomplish his purpose. The  
 “ two first days the fatigue was not very  
 “ great, they walked on a sterile soil, but  
 “ had not yet entered the vast and naked  
 “ wilderness. As they proceeded they per-  
 “ ceived nothing around them but sand on  
 “ sand, without trees, plants, or the least  
 “ trace of culture. In the midst of these  
 “ parched deserts, they, like sailors, looked  
 “ earnestly for land; the water which the  
 “ camels carried in skins was soon all gone,  
 “ and the loss was irreparable in a place  
 “ where no springs could be found, and  
 “ where every thing was burnt up by the  
 “ sun. In this extremity, whether it was  
 “ the effect of chance, or the benevolence  
 “ of the gods, the heavens were overspread  
 “ with clouds, and the rain fell in torrents,

(*b*) Callisthenes, according to Strabo, says that Alex-  
 ander, when he undertook this voyage, wished to imitate  
 Perseus and Hercules, who had done so before him.

“ restoring

“ restoring life to wretches expiring with  
“ thirst, and sinking under the excess of the  
“ heats. At last, after four days march,  
“ across this fearful desert, they arrived at  
“ the territory sacred to Jupiter Ammon.  
“ What was their astonishment at finding,  
“ in a country surrounded by deserts, forests  
“ whose thick shades were impenetrable to  
“ the sun, brooks of excellent water, and a  
“ climate deliciously temperate, enjoying, all  
“ the year, the charms of spring and salu-  
“ brity!

“ The inhabitants of these woods, named  
“ Ammonians, reside in scattered huts. A  
“ triple wall, built in the centre of the  
“ grove, served them as a citadel. The  
“ first enclosure contained the ancient palace  
“ of their kings; the second, in which the  
“ temple stands, was appropriated to the  
“ women, children and concubines; and the  
“ warriors, appointed to defend this asylum,  
“ dwelt in the third. The fountain of the  
“ sun ran in another grove; in like manner,  
“ consecrated to the oracle of Ammon. Its  
“ water is tepid in the morning, cool at  
“ noon, hot in the evening, and scalding at  
“ midnight. The statue revered here does



“ not resemble the deities usually formed by  
 “ sculptors. Made of emeralds and precious  
 “ stones, it has the form of a ram, (c) from  
 “ the head to the waist.\* When any one  
 “ wishes to consult it, the priests bear it  
 “ in a gilded boat, to which, on each side,  
 “ are suspended cups of silver. Matrons and  
 “ virgins follow, singing an uncouth hymn,  
 “ after an ancient custom, by which they  
 “ believe Jupiter will be rendered propitious,  
 “ and return them a true answer.”

Alexander departed from the lake Mareotis  
 to go to this temple. The two first days he  
 marched over a barren country, but where  
 they did not sink in ; that is to say, he kept  
 westward, on the sea shore, for had he gone  
 south, or south-west, he would immediately  
 have entered a desert covered with deep sands.

(c) This idol has the form of a ram, because that  
 animal was consecrated to Jupiter Ammon, a symbolical  
 deity, signifying the sun arrived at the sign of Aries, or  
 the Ram. The boat in which they carried it represented  
 the vessel in which the Egyptians placed the sun, describing  
 his course through the zodiac. These symbols will be  
 explained in the following letters.

\* The learned are aware of the various readings and  
 doubts on this passage. T.

Seven or eight leagues from Parætonium, he entered the burning wilderness, in which he made a four days march, and then immediately took the direction of the habitation of the Ammonians, nearly following the dotted line traced upon the map. This I am persuaded of, because Ptolemy places the first Oasis under the same parallel as lake Mæris; from which Oasis Strabo (*d*) affirms the temple of Ammon was not far distant. Callisthenes, who makes Alexander take his departure from Parætonium, does not wander far from our route; and it is possible the conqueror went to that city, and, afterwards, turned south.

Strabo (*e*) says that, under the emperor Augustus, the Sibylline verses, and the divinations of the Etruscans, had deprived the oracle of Ammon of much of its credit. In the thirteenth century it was forgotten, but the Arabs assure us that country still possessed inhabitants. From their writings it appears that the fountain of the sun, which Quintus

(*d*) Strabo, lib. 17. Not the first, but third, according to Strabo, i. e. M. Savary has reversed the order by some oversight. They are properly placed in the map. T.

(*e*) Strabo, ubi supra.

Curtius describes so marvellously, was only a hot spring, which had less heat during the day, and greater at night.

The Oases became places of exile under the monarchs of the lower empire, who, infatuated by Theology, a study which should occupy only those to whom religion has confided the sacred trust, and employed in causing sometimes truth and sometimes falsehood to triumph, sent, by turns, heretics and orthodox believers hither. Nestorius and St. Athanasius were both exiles here. The Digest contains the following passage(*f*): “ There is a kind  
“ of exile which consists in banishing the  
“ guilty to the Oases of Egypt, where they  
“ remain as in an island.” St. Athanasius, in his apology, complains of this barbarity. “ The Arians,” says he, “ have outgone the  
“ emperor’s orders, in sending old men and  
“ bishops amidst these fearful deserts. Those  
“ of Lybia, in the great Oasis; and those  
“ of the Thebais, in the Oasis of Ammon;  
“ to the end that they may perish in tra-  
“ versing burning sands.”

These habitations, become famous by the banishment of the most learned men of the

(*f*) Lib. 48. tit. 22.

lower

lower empire, were little known to the Persians. Cambyfes, having ravaged Egypt, wished to feize the spoils of the temple of Jupiter Ammon. (g) “ The troops he sent  
 “ againſt the Ammonians departed from  
 “ Thebes, and came to the city of Oaſis,  
 “ inhabited by the Samians, of the tribe of  
 “ Æſchrionia, which country is ſeven days  
 “ march from the metropolis of Egypt, and  
 “ is called, by the Greeks, the iſle of the  
 “ bleſt. The army arrived there, as it is  
 “ ſaid, but the Ammonians only know what  
 “ became of them afterwards, for they were  
 “ never heard of more. They ſay that,  
 “ marching towards the temple of Jupiter,  
 “ as they went, they were buried under tor-  
 “ rents of burning ſands, which the ſouth  
 “ winds raiſed.” The route of the army  
 makes it plain the guides, who deteſted the  
 Perſians, led them aſtray amidſt the deſert;  
 for they ſhould have departed from the lake  
 Mareotis to this temple; or from the envi-  
 rons of Memphis. The Egyptians, intending  
 the deſtruction of their enemies, led them  
 from Thebes to the great Oaſis, three days  
 journey from Abydus, and, having brought

(g) Herodotus, lib. 3.

them into the vast solitudes of Lybia, they, no doubt, abandoned them, in the night, and delivered them over to death.

The Oasis of Ammon is little known to the modern Egyptians, but the second more so. Abulfeda places there a city, named Behnesa; (*b*) not the same Behnesa which stands on the canal of Joseph, and which corresponds with the town of Achmounain, where there are magnificent antique remains. The great Oasis, most frequented of the three, because on the road which the caravans from Abyssinia travel, has a great number of inhabitants. The Bey of Girga sends a caches, as governor, and to levy tribute. When the Abyssinians leave Egypt, on their return, and have refreshed themselves in that fruitful valley, they proceed south, and come to another, situated under the tropic, which the Geographer of Nubia thus describes. “ The country of Elouah, west of  
“ Affouan, was formerly very populous, but  
“ is no longer inhabited; here are many

(*b*) “ Behnesa is a city, situated near the canal of  
“ Joseph. There is another city of this name, in the  
“ country of Elouah, on the confines of the land of the  
“ negroes.” Abul. Des. of Egypt.

“ springs,

“ springs, rivulets, and fruit-trees, with cities  
 “ buried in their own ruins.” Another part  
 of the army of Cambyfes was destroyed, pass-  
 ing from this valley into Ethiopia. “ Cam-  
 “ byfes (*i*), being come to Thebes, chose  
 “ fifty thousand men whom he commanded  
 “ to pillage, and burn, the temple of Jupiter  
 “ Ammon. He himself marched against  
 “ the Ethiopians with the remainder of his  
 “ army; but, before he had proceeded one-  
 “ fifth of the way, his provisions were all  
 “ exhausted. They eat their horses, but  
 “ this was a short resource. Had wisdom  
 “ been his guide, this prince would have  
 “ returned; but, impelled by blind fury, he  
 “ went on. So long as the soldiers found  
 “ herbs and plants they fed on them; but,  
 “ this poor support failing them in the midst  
 “ of sands, they cast lots, and every tenth  
 “ man was devoured by his companions.  
 “ At this dreadful news, the Persian king  
 “ abandoned his expedition into Ethiopia;  
 “ and, returning back, arrived at Thebes,  
 “ after the loss of half his army (*k*).”

(*i*) Herodotus, lib. 3.

(*k*) It is very probable that here, as before, the guides  
 missed Cambyfes, who set fire to all the temples of Egypt.

What

What happens at present, in performing this journey, proves the event to be very credible. Travellers, departing from the fertile valley lying under the tropic, march seven days before they come to the first town in Ethiopia. They find their way, in the day time, by looking at marks; and, at night, by observing the stars. The sand hills they had observed on the preceding journey having been often carried away by the winds, deceive the guides; and, if they wander the least out of their road, the camels, having passed five or six days without drinking, sink under their burthen, and die: the men are not long before they submit to the same fate, and, sometimes, out of a great number, not a single traveller escapes; at others, the burning winds of the south raise vortexes of dust, which suffocate man and beast; and the next caravan sees the ground strewed with bodies, totally parched up. This horrid sight, these dreadful dangers, do not terrify the Abyssinians, who, from the earliest ages, have brought gold dust, musk, and elephants teeth into Egypt. So great is the power of habit over man!

I have the honor to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R VIII.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INCREASE OF  
THE NILE.

*Remarks on the Nile, its sources, and the phænomena attending its overflowing. At what time the mound is opened at the head of the canal that leads to Grand Cairo. The festivals and rejoicings. Nocturnal excursions, on the waters which fill the great squares of the capital; and the pleasures they afford. What means might be employed to ensure a regular inundation over Egypt, and never-failing plenty.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Nile, Sir, is the most famous river on earth. Travellers, of all ages, have described the fecundity of its waters, with enthusiasm. Its seven mouths are celebrated by the Poets, and history is filled with the miracles its inundations produce. To the ancient people who, on its banks, nurtured and brought the infant arts to perfection, it



owes this celebrity: oppressed, as it were, by its bounties, they appointed festivals in its honour, and erected altars as to a god; or, at least, as to the first of God's gifts. Had this river fed only Turks and Arabs, its name, like so many others, would have been known but in maps; its glory was united to that of a famous nation, and all the ends of the earth came to admire the works raised to contain it, and the immortal monuments erected on its borders.

Except the Egyptians, the ancients were all ignorant of its origin. A Portuguese Jesuit, in the last century, pretended he had made the discovery. His words are these:

“ In the province Sahala, west of the kingdom of *Goyam*, called by the inhabitants  
“ *Agous*, are the sources of the Nile. It  
“ first flows from two deep springs, which  
“ both lie high; the earth surrounding  
“ them is boggy, and trembles under the  
“ step. The water spouts from the mountain with a noise like the explosion of a  
“ cannon. After proceeding some distance  
“ through the valley, it receives a second  
“ rivulet, coming from the east, and these,  
“ united, direct their course north. Two  
other

“ other torrents discharge themselves into  
“ them, and form a stream which joins the  
“ river Yeman ; after long circuits, east and  
“ west, these fall into a great lake ; then,  
“ leaving the lake, they form the river Nile,  
“ which takes its hasty course toward the  
“ Mediterranean.”

Be this as it may, these waters would not be sufficient for the general inundation which covers the earth for a space of four hundred leagues, for it extends to Ethiopia ; but, during the months, March, April, May, and June, the north winds drive the clouds toward the high mountains, beyond the Equator. Stopped by this barrier, clouds on clouds accumulate, till they descend in rain, which falls in torrents, and fills the vallies. The union of an innumerable multitude of rivulets forms the Nile, and produces the inundation. From the unanimous testimony of the Abyssinians, who bring gold dust to Grand Cairo, this river, taking it rise in Ethiopia, divides into two branches, one of which, known by the name of Asserac, or the blue river, joins the Niger, and, traversing Africa from east to west, falls into

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the Atlantic Ocean : the other, running north, between two chains of mountains, and meeting with the rocks of granite which impede its course, forms six cataracts, much more terrible than that of Syene, and these frightful waterfalls absolutely impede its navigation ; but, arrived at the first city in Egypt, it falls eleven feet, into the gulph itself has dug, and the perils of which the watermen dare face. Descending through this fine country, it fills the canals and lakes, overflows the lands, deposits a fruitful slime, and discharges itself, as formerly, through seven mouths, into the Mediterranean.

The Nile's increase begins early in June, but is not much perceived till the summer solstice ; when the waters become troubled, of a reddish tincture, and are thought unwholsome. They must be purified before drank ; which is done by mixing bitter almonds, pounded to dust, in a jar full of water, and kept turning, with the arm, for some minutes : it is then left to settle, and, in five or six hours, the heterogenous particles subside to the bottom of the vessel, and the

the water becomes limpid and excellent (*l*). The Egyptians attribute this fermentation of the Nile to the dew, which then falls in abundance. Many historians have seriously affirmed it contributed to the inundation. It is much more natural to think the river, overflowing in Abyssinia and Ethiopia, brings down a great quantity of sand, and millions of the eggs of insects, which, hatching about the time of the solstice, produce the fermentation of the waters, and that reddish tincture which renders them unhealthy.

The Nile continues increasing till near the end of August, and, often, even, in September. The Nilometer at Elephantina formerly denoted to what degree the inundation would rise. The experience of ages had afforded marks known to those whose trust it was to watch. The governors of the provinces were instantly informed, and the necessary labours for the good of agriculture were regulated accordingly. When

(*l*) I have made the same experiment, which I had seen practised in Egypt, on the waters of the Seine, when they were troubled, and yellow, and found the same consequences; but it is necessary the vessel should be large to have the proper effect.

the Arabs conquered Egypt, the Nilometer was at the small town of Halouan, facing Memphis. Amrou destroyed that stately capital, and built the city of Fostat, where the governors of the Caliphs fixed their residence. Some ages after, the Mekias, or Nilometer, was built at one extremity of the island of Raouda, and the column to measure the waters was erected in the centre of a low chamber, the walls of which are exceedingly solid, and the bottom on a level with the bed of the Nile. The Mekias has never since been changed, and officers are now appointed to examine the progress of the inundation, which is daily proclaimed in the streets of Cairo, by the public criers, to whom the people, interested in the event, give some slight reward, and it becomes the news of the day. As Egypt pays no tribute to the Grand Seignor if the waters do not rise to sixteen cubits, the Egyptians often disguise the truth, and do not proclaim they have risen to that height till they have surpassed it.

The day of this proclamation is a day of rejoicing, and a solemn feast among the Egyptians. The Pacha and his whole court descend

descend from the castle, and go in pomp to Fostat, where the canal begins that runs through Grand Cairo. He places himself under a magnificent pavillion, erected there. The Beys, with their musicians playing before them, and their Mamluks following, are his attendants. The chief priests ride horses richly caparisoned, and all the inhabitants, on horseback, on foot, and in boats, hasten to be present at this ceremony. More than three hundred thousand people assemble on land and water. The boats, most of them painted, and artfully carved, have canopies, and streamers of various colours. Those of the women are known by their elegance, richness, the gilt columns that support the canopy, and, particularly, by the blinds let down before the windows. The people all remain silent till the moment the Pacha gives the signal, and then, instantly, shouts of joy rend the air; the trumpets sound their flourishes, and the kettle drums and other instruments reverberate from all parts. Certain men throw down the statue of clay, which was placed on the mound, which statue is called THE BETROTHED, and is the remains of an ancient rite among

the Egyptians, who consecrated a virgin to the Nile, and whom, in times of dearth, they sometimes threw into the waters. The mound is presently destroyed, and the waters, no longer meeting an obstacle, flow toward Grand Cairo. The Pacha throws gold and silver coins into the stream, which good swimmers immediately dive for, and bring up. This action may be regarded as a kind of homage paid to the Nile, the source of the wealth of Egypt. The inhabitants appear intoxicated with joy; they congratulate and pay compliments to each other all day; and songs of thanksgiving are every where heard. A number of female dancers assemble on the banks of the *Kbalig*, and regale the spectators with their lascivious dances. All is mirth and good cheer, and the very poor themselves feast. This universal rejoicing is not surprising: the fate of the country depends on the inundation, and, when it arrives, all behold the hopes of harvest, the picture of plenty, and anticipate the promised good.

The evenings present a spectacle still more agreeable. All the great squares of the city are floated, and the families assemble in boats adorned

adorned with tapestry, rich cushions, and every convenience luxurious ease can wish. The streets, mosques, and minarets, are illuminated : they row from square to square, taking with them fruits and refreshments. The most numerous assembly is usually at Lesbekia, which is the largest square in the city, and near half a league in circumference ; it forms an immense basin surrounded by the palaces of the Beys, which are embellished with various coloured lights. Many thousands of boats, to the masts of which lamps are suspended, produce an ever-varying illumination. The clear and starry heavens, which, there, are seldom obscured by mists, and the profusion of artificial lights on the waters, give all the brilliancy of day to the sweet refreshing coolness of night. Imagine, Sir, the pleasure with which the people, who have been scorched twelve hours by a sun so ardent, come and breathe the cool air of these lakes : seldom are the charms of this nocturnal scene disturbed by impetuous winds ; they fall at sun-set, and gentler airs agitate the atmosphere. I own the caprice of Oriental manners is a tax on the European. Men associate only with



men, and women with women ; the charm of whose society is here procured with difficulty. The disguise necessary, and the attendant dangers, warn the reason, and compel prudence. The lamps are obliged to be always kept lighted ; this is a precaution necessary for the public safety, which the Oualli, who goes from place to place, takes care to see punctually observed. If this officer, who superintends the police, finds a boat without light, he is justified in beheading all the persons on board ; and, unless a suitable present restrains the arm of the executioners who accompany him, he instantly, and rigorously, executes his right.

When the Ramazan happens during the inundation, this month, so dreadful to the poor, is a time of continual banquetting among the rich, who pass their nights feasting on the waters. During the day they sleep in a vast hall, where pure air circulates near a marble basin ; where a fountain of limpid water plays, and the brinks of which are surrounded by the Arabian jasmine and odoriferous flowers. The salubrity of this apartment is maintained by a north window always open, near the summit of the dome : thus, while

while the husbandmen broil in the fields, bedewing the earth with the sweat of their brow, the rich pass their time in voluptuous slumbers, amidst cooling airs, and the balsamic exhalations of plants. The utmost ambition of a Turk, who is not in place, is to live agreeably, and wholly free from cares ; but the Beys, on the contrary, preyed upon by fear, placed at the head of a republic impoverished by their devastations, dazzle for a moment, then disappear, cut off by the sword of their colleagues; or the poison of their slaves.

Egypt has for numerous ages, been inundated, which has prodigiously raised the soil ; this fact is attested by obelisks, buried fifteen or twenty feet, and porticos that have half disappeared. Their ancient cities, built on artificial mounts, and the mounds they raised, shewed the Egyptians dreaded the high inundations. At present the land is so much higher that the waters seldom rise so as to injure agriculture. When they are under sixteen cubits a famine is threatened, and the years of abundance are those of between eighteen and two-and-twenty cubits. When the waters exceed this, they lay too long

long on the ground, and prevent its being sown; which, however, seldom happens. On the contrary, inundations below the medium often leave the high lands fruitless. Were the canals opened, the mounds repaired, and the great reservoirs filled, they might water a much larger extent of country, and procure harvests infinitely more abundant.

It would be possible to ensure a regular inundation to Egypt, and a never-failing fertility; but this must be by conquering Ethiopia, or forming a treaty with its inhabitants, by which they might be permitted to confine the waters of the Nile, where they disperse themselves over the sands that lie to the west.

“ In the year 1106, when Elmeftanfor  
“ was Sultan of Egypt, the inundation to-  
“ tally failed. The Sultan sent Michael,  
“ patriarch of the Jacobines, with magnifi-  
“ cent presents, to the Emperor of Ethio-  
“ pia, who came to meet, received him  
“ favourably, and demanded the subject of  
“ his embassy. Michael replied, that the  
“ waters of the Nile having failed, had  
“ made the Egyptians dread all the horrors  
“ of famine, and thrown them into the ut-  
“ most

“ most consternation: he added remon-  
 “ strances which induced the Emperor to  
 “ suffer a dam to be opened that had turned  
 “ the river, which, taking its usual course,  
 “ rose three cubits in one day.’ Michael, on  
 “ his return, received great honors (*m*).”

This shews the possibility of turning the course of the Nile, and proves a mound, raised to stop up the great channel which communicates with the Niger, would cause a prodigious increase of water. Were a powerful and intelligent people in possession of Egypt, such wonderful changes would be easily made, and it would become the wealthiest country in the world. The Egyptians have a certain sign of inundation, and the height to which it will rise. When the north wind, during the months I have before mentioned, repelled by impetuous winds from the south, is driven back, the assemblage of clouds is less than usual in Upper Abyssinia, and the increase is very small; mounds then would be of the greatest utility; but, on the contrary, when the north wind

(*m*) Elmacin, history of the Arabs. This happened under Aboulcasem, the twenty-seventh of the Abbasside Caliphs, and the forty-eighth from Mahomet.

is predominant, and repels the tempestuous south towards the equator, it brings heavy clouds, and there is a certainty of a favourable inundation : in this case it would be necessary to open the dams of Ethiopia, and give the superabundant waters their usual vent. By means of this augmentation, also, there might be a canal between Cophtos and Cosseir, which would be ranked among the most famous, and the most useful, works of Egypt. These, Sir, are ideas thrown into the expanse of possibility; they perhaps may hereafter be realized. Various powers look with watchful eyes on this fine kingdom, governed by barbarians incapable of defending it; the first nation, therefore, that attacks will conquer it, and then there can be little doubt but its face will be changed.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R IX.

## OF THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT.

*The government of Egypt, since its conquest by the Arabs, and the various revolutions it has undergone. Articles of the treaty granted by Sultan Selim, to the Circassian Mamluks. The limited power of the Pachas, and the preponderance of that of the Beys; particularly in the dignity of Sheik Elbalad and Emir Hadgi. The manner in which the Ottoman governors are received, and the disgrace with which they are sent back. Observations on the decline of the Ottoman authority in Egypt.*

To M. I. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** Promised to send you particulars concerning the government of Egypt, so little known in France, and hope the observations of several years will enable me to fulfil this promise. It will first, however, be necessary to begin by an introductory account, which will throw light on what I have to offer.

From

From the middle of the seventh century to 1250, the Arabs were in possession of Egypt, which then was a part of the vast empire of the Caliphs. Vizirs governed it in their name, and, possessed of unbounded power, exercised supreme authority. They had the right of life and death, and, rendering an account to the Caliphs, only, of their conduct, governed the country according to their caprice. However great their tyranny, the cries of the oppressed people never could reach the throne; the Vizirs took care to gain those who surrounded it by rich presents. The government being thus despotic, national happiness, or misery, depended on the virtues, or vices, of one man. Many of these Vizirs swayed an iron sceptre; some few made commerce, agriculture, and the arts flourish. Others, among whom was the famous Ebn Toulon, rebelled, and proclaimed themselves kings; but the crown seldom descended to their children. After the death of the rebel, the province returned to the dominion of its former masters.

In the year 982, Moaz, sovereign of the western part of Africa, and descendant of the fatimite Caliphs, who had founded a kingdom

dom

dom there two centuries before, sent his generals to conquer Egypt, which having performed, he made it the seat of Empire. His offspring reigned till 1189, when Salah Eddin established the dynasty of the Ayoubites there. This warlike prince, the terror of the crusaders, whom he had almost driven out of Palestine, was overthrown by Richard Cœur de Lion, near the walls of St. John d'Acre; and the name of the English monarch became terrible throughout the east. The government of Salah Eddin, and his successors, was monarchical, under whom Egypt became flourishing. The remains of the academies they founded, and to which by their rich benefactions they drew the learned men of the east, are still to be seen at Grand Cairo. In the year 1250, immediately after the defeat of Louis IX. the Baharite Mamluks, (*n*) Turks by descent, massacred Touran Shah, the last prince of the Ayoubites, and the son of Nejem Eddin, their benefactor; with whom ended the reign of the Arabian

(*n*) Mamluk signifies acquired, possessed. They called themselves *Baharites*, or maritime, because Nejem eddin, who instituted them, bestowed the government of castles near the sea, and in the island of Raouda, on them.

princes



princes over Egypt, and since which they have ever been governed by foreigners.

The Baharite Mamluks changed its form of government, and made it republican. Their principal men elected a chief, to whom they confided great authority. He had a right to make war or peace, first advising with his council, the members of which they themselves were. He could appoint ministers, ambassadors, governors, and generals ; provided he chose them from among the Mamluks. The necessity he was under of gaining the votes of those chiefs limited his power ; and his politics consisted in procuring their favour, making sure of the most powerful, and in immediately crushing the conspiracies that were formed against him ; for each of the powerful Mamluks, of this Aristocracy, would necessarily endeavour to depose the possessor, and seat himself on the throne. Though the people had no part in the government, yet had the Prince cause to fear their discontent : an ambitious rival, aided by them, might deprive him of his crown. Thus we see the chief of this republic was surrounded by dangers ; the duration of his empire depended on his personal qualities, and

and he could not transmit his power to his children. Hence, during the hundred and thirty-six years the Baharite Mamluks governed Egypt, they had twenty-seven kings; a proof their reigns were short and tempestuous.

About the middle of the fourteenth century, the Circassian Mamluks dethroned the Baharites, but preserved their form of government, and continued in possession of Egypt till the conquest of it by Sultan Selim, in 1517. It is necessary to give clear and precise ideas of the Mamluks before we speak of the changes Selim made in the constitution. The appellation Mamluk is bestowed on children who, carried off by merchants, or banditti, from Georgia, Circassia, Natolia, and the various provinces of the Ottoman Empire, are afterwards sold in Constantinople and Grand Cairo. The Grandees of Egypt, who had a similar origin, bring them up in their houses, and destine them to succeed to their dignities; and this custom is, perhaps, more ancient than the time of Joseph, who, sold thus to Potiphar (*o*), High-priest of

(*o*) This Egyptian name comes from *Potiphras*, priest of the sun.

Heliopolis, became overseer of Egypt. These foreigners, at present, can alone enjoy the title of Bey, and fill the offices of the state. The law is so precise that the son of a Bey cannot be raised to this eminent station; he, therefore, usually, embraces the profession of arms. The divan assigns him a proper subsistence, and names him *Ebn El Balad*, son of the country (*p*).

The Mamluks are most of them born of Christian parents, but are forced to embrace Mahometanism, and suffer circumcision. They are taught Turkish, and Arabic, and, when they have learned perfectly to read and write, the Koran, also, which is their code of religion and laws. The understanding of these clear, simple, and precise laws, enables them to de-

(*p*) From what I have said you will perceive, Sir, the words *Mamluk* and *Abd* are very different; the latter signifying slave, and those who bear it are destined to the meanest offices, and never rise to important stations; while the former fill the most distinguished posts. Historians, therefore, have improperly given the title of slave to the Mamluks, and, in the history of the lower empire, called them *Mummelus*. Authors ought not to disfigure the names of persons and things, but should endeavour to give them their true signification. History would then be more perfect, and give us more distinct ideas.

termine

termine all cases, immediately, with equity ; and the Mahometan, who is well studied in this book knows, perfectly, his duty to God and man : he is then qualified for any office, civil, military, or ecclesiastic.

The Mamluks are taught, from their earliest infancy, to ride, throw the javelin, use the sabre, and fire-arms, and are continually exercised in military evolutions, and in learning to support the heat of the climate, and the thirst of the deserts, with fortitude. Hence they acquire a strong constitution, and dauntless courage ; and would become excellent soldiers, were they instructed in European tactics. Disciplined by our officers, they would not cede, in valour, to any nation upon earth ; but they fight without order, and are absolutely ignorant of our art of gunnery, which is, now, so highly improved.

At fifteen, or eighteen, these youths are excellent horsemen, speak, and write, several languages, are intimately acquainted with the religion and laws of the country, and are capable of exercising the offices they are destined to fill. They rise, and usually by their merit, through the various trusts in the house of the Beys, till they arrive at the post

of Cachef (*q*), when they govern the towns which are dependant on their patrons, at which time they are permitted to buy Mamluks, who follow their fortune, and become their companions and instruments. Their next rise is to the dignity of Bey, which gives them a seat among the four and twenty members of the Divan, or council, of the republic: but, though thus advanced, they cease not to regard themselves as the servants of their first master, and preserve a perfect submission to him. Such, Sir, is the origin of the Mamluks; and such the career they have to run. We will now proceed with our narrative.

Sultan Selim, having conquered Egypt, and overthrown the Circassian Mamluks, who could not withstand the numerous armies and bloody battles of the Turkish Emperor, caused their king, Thoman Bey, to be hanged at one of the gates of Cairo. This barbarous action disgusted them so much that they only waited the departure of the Turks again to take to their arms. The

(*q*) The Cachefs are the lieutenants of the Beys, and command the towns which are in the government of their patrons.

intoxication

intoxication of success once dissipated, Selim perceived his error; and, that he might profit by this important conquest, endeavoured to gain the good-will of the Mamluks; in order to which he made very little change in their form of government, and granted them very peculiar privileges, specified in a treaty, the principal articles of which are as follow.

Though, with Almighty aid, our invincible arms have conquered the kingdom of Egypt, yet we, from our benevolence, grant the four and twenty Sangiaks (*r*), of this country, a republican government, on the following conditions.

I. The republic of Egypt shall acknowledge our sovereignty, and that of our successors; and, as a mark of obedience, shall honor, as our representative, the governor whom we shall please to send, and who shall reside in the castle of Grand Cairo. During his administration, he shall undertake nothing contrary to our will, or the interests of the republic; but shall advise with the Beys concerning the good of the state; and, should he become disagreeable to them, or

(*r*) Sangiaks has the same meaning as Beys.

attempt to infringe their privileges, we authorise them to suspend him, and lay their complaints before our sublime Porte, that they may be delivered from his oppression.

II. In time of war, the republic shall be obliged to furnish us and our successors with twelve thousand men, commanded by Sangiaks, and maintain them till the conclusion of peace.

III. Each year the republic shall raise five hundred and sixty thousand Aslani (s), and send them, under the escort of a Bey, to our sublime Porte, who shall receive, from our Defterdar, (Treasurer) a legal acquittance, to which our seal, and that of our Vizir, shall be affixed.

IV. The republic shall raise the like Khafna (sum) of five hundred and sixty thousand Aslani for the support of Medina, and the caaba, or temple of Mecca, which shall be annually sent, under the escort of

(s) This sum has been increased to eight hundred thousand Aslani; but the Beys pretend they are obliged to be at excessive expences, in repairing canals and fortresses, and do not send the half to Constantinople. Aslani is a silver coin, worth about half a crown.

the Sheik El Balad (*t*), or the Emir Hadge, which they shall deliver to the Scherif, the successor of our prophet, for the service of the house of God, and to be distributed among the persons who reside there, that their prayers may be obtained for us, and the faithful who believe in the Koran. (*u*).

V. The republic shall only maintain, in time of peace, fourteen thousand soldiers, or janissaries, but shall have permission to augment that army, during war, that its enemies, and ours, may be opposed.

VI. The republic shall also deduct, from the productions of the country, a million of couffes (*x*) of grain, six hundred thousand of wheat, and four hundred thousand of barley, to be laid up in our granaries.

VII. These articles observed, the republic shall enjoy absolute power over the inhabitants of Egypt; but, in religious matters,

(*t*) *Sheik El Balad*, the Elder of the country, is the title of the Bey who is at the head of the republic. *Emir Hadge* signifies Prince of the caravan, and is the second dignity in the republic.

(*u*) This sum is not raised in money, but corn, and the productions of Egypt.

(*x*) An oval panier, made of date-tree leaves, containing about a hundred and seventy pounds weight.



shall advise with the Mollah, or High priest, who shall be subject to our authority, or that of our successors.

VIII. The republic shall enjoy, as heretofore, the right of coining, and stamping the name *Mafr* (*y*); but shall add thereto our name, or that of our successors, and the governor we send shall inspect the coinage, that the legend may not be altered.

IX. The Beys shall elect among themselves a Sheik El Balad; who, when confirmed by our governor, shall be their head, and acknowledged by our officers as chief of the republic. If it shall so happen that our governors shall become guilty of oppression, and exceed the limits of his power, the Sheik El Balad shall have a right to lay the complaints of the public before our sublime Porte. Should foreign enemies disturb the peace of the republic, we promise, for us and our successors, to protect it, with all our powers, without having a right to exact any indemnity for the expence incurred in its aid.

(*y*) *Mafr* is the name the Arabs give to Egypt in general, and Grand Cairo in particular, pretending that this country was peopled by Misraim, grandson of Noah.

Done and signed, by our clemency, in favour of the republic of Egypt, in the year 887, of the Hegira, (A. D. 1517.)

From this treaty you will learn, Sir, the last change of Egyptian government partook of Monarchy and Aristocracy. The first in the person of a Pacha, the second in those of the Beys, who, essentially, compose the republic. The Pacha, properly speaking, is a phantom, dispelled by their breath. The Sangiaks, at the head of provinces and armies, in reality, enjoy all the power; to their mercy are the people abandoned, in whose favour the treaty contains not one word. May we not say a merchant sold three or four millions of slaves, to four and twenty foreigners, for five hundred and sixty thousand aslani? Absolute power is consigned over to them. They are permitted to levy arbitrary tributes, and exercise, without restraint, every species of tyranny. Thus do despots barter nations! Thus do they submit to such shame, and think not of reclaiming the sacred rights they have received from nature! Selim, in the vast extent of his dominions, saw but a vile herd of slaves, whom he might dispose of at his pleasure.

The

The Beys perfectly feel the power they possess, which they dreadfully abuse. The Pacha remains no longer than while he is subservient to their designs; should he dare speak in defence of his master's interests, or those of the Egyptians, he becomes a state criminal: the Divan assembles, and he is expelled. The following is the manner in which they receive, and eject, those representatives of the Grand Seignior.

When a new Pacha lands, at Alexandria, he gives notice of his arrival to the council of the republic, and the Sheik El Balad sends the Beys of most address to compliment him, bring him presents, and profess great submission. While they attend on him they artfully sound his inclinations, study his character, and endeavour to learn, from his own mouth, or that of his officers, what are the orders he brings. Should they find them inimical to their own purposes, they expedite a courier to the Sheik El Balad, who assembles the Divan, and the Pacha is forbidden to proceed farther. They then write to the Grand Signor that the new governor comes with hostile intentions, and such as will excite rebellion among his faithful subjects, and  
request

request his recall, which is sure to be complied with. When the chiefs of the republic believe they have nothing to fear from the Pacha, they invite him to Grand Cairo; the deputies place him in a sumptuous galley, and escort him all the way. The attendant boats are all elegantly tilted, and several filled with musicians. He advances, slowly, at the head of the fleet, no vessel being suffered to pass that of the Pacha. Those who are, unfortunately, making a voyage up the Nile, are obliged to follow in his suite. He stops at Hellai (z), and the Sheik El Balad either comes himself to receive him, or deputes several Sangiaks. The heads of the republic again congratulate him on his landing; the Aga of the Janissaries presents him the keys of the castle, prays him to make it his residence, and he is conducted, in pomp, through the city. I have seen, and can therefore describe, the entrance of a Pacha.

The various corps of infantry, with their noisy musick, march first, in two files, their colours waving; the cavalry follows. About five or six thousand horsemen advance in good order, their cloathing made of very

(z) A small village, half a league below Boulac.

bright stuffs, while their floating robes, enormous mustachoes, and long lances, of shining steel, give them a majestic and warlike air. Then come the Beys, magnificently cloathed, and attended by their Mamluks, mounted on Arabian horses, high mettled, and adorned with housings, embroidered in gold and silver; the bridles of those of the chiefs are bedecked with fine pearls and precious stones, and their saddles with glittering gold. The various retinues, for each Bey had his own, were exceedingly elegant; the beauty of the youth, the richness of their habits, and their excellent horsemanship, all together formed a very agreeable sight. The Pacha closed the march, advancing gravely, preceded by two hundred horsemen, a band of music, and four led horses, slowly guided by slaves on foot, covered with housings, most richly embroidered in gold and pearl, that trailed on the ground. The Pacha, mounted on a beauteous barb, wore a cluster of large diamonds in his turban, which darted back the sun's rays. This procession gave me an idea of the oriental pomp and magnificence of the ancient monarchs of Asia, when they shewed themselves in public. It began about eight, and lasted till noon. On

On the morrow, the Pacha assembled the Divan, and invited the Beys to be present: he sat on a raised seat with a barred window, like the Grand Seigneur. His Kiaya, or Lieutenant, read the orders of the Porte, and the Sangiaks, profoundly bowing, promised obedience in all things which should not infringe their rights. This ended, a collation was served; and, when the assembly rose, the Pacha presented the Sheik El Balad with a rich furred robe, and a horse magnificently harnessed; also castans to the other Beys. Such, Sir, is the installation of a Pacha.

His office is a kind of banishment: he cannot leave his palace without the permission of the Sheik El Balad, but is a state prisoner, who, in the midst of splendor, cannot avoid feeling the weight of his chains. His revenue amounts to near a hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds sterling, and is raised from the duties paid at Suez, on the merchandize of the Red Sea. The ambition of the Beys presents him with a fruitful source of wealth; when, possessing political cunning, and a knowledge of his own means, he has the art to sow dissention among the chiefs

chiefs and form parties. Each will then endeavour to obtain his interest, and wealth pours in upon him. The Sangiaks named by the Divan also purchase a confirmation of their dignity of the Pacha, and the inheritance of those who die without issue increases his treasury. Thus may the Grand Seignor's representative maintain himself in office, and become immensely rich, provided he proceeds with the utmost circumspection; for, the ground on which he stands is so slippery, the least wrong step occasions his fall; and unforeseen circumstances will often counteract his utmost policy. Should some young audacious Sangiak, by his crimes or courage, vanquish the party favoured by the Pacha, and arrive at the dignity of Sheik El Balad, he assembles the council, and the governor is ignominiously expelled. His order to depart is entrusted to an officer, cloathed in black, who, carrying it in his bosom, advances into the audience-chamber, and taking up a corner of the carpet which covers the sofa, bows profoundly, and says, *Inſel Pacha*; Pacha come down; which having said he departs. The Governor is immediately obliged to pack up and retire,

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in the space of four-and-twenty hours, to Boulac; where he waits for orders from Constantinople. His person is generally safe; but, should the prevailing Beys have complaints against him, they make him render a severe account of his administration, and the presents he has received; after which they divide the spoil. The council of the republic elects a Caimakan, during the interregnum, to supply his place, till the arrival of the new Pacha. I have been several times a witness of events like this, during my abode in Egypt. I hope what I have said will give you some knowledge of the government of the country. The history of Ali Bey, and some others of his successors, a sketch of which I shall send you in the following letters, will shew you these objects in action, and supply you with the means of drawing your own conclusions.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R - X.

## HISTORY OF ALI BEY.

*Birth of Ali Bey ; is carried off : changes his religion, when sold to a Bey of Grand Cairo : promoted to various offices in the state. He conducts the caravan : defeats the Arabs : is made a Bey, and takes his seat in the Divan : his patron assassinated by the contrary faction : arrives at the dignity of Sheik El Balad, and revenges his patron's death : league formed against him : escapes to Jerusalem and St. John d'Acre, where he is welcomed by Sheik Daher : is recalled, but the hatred of his enemies again compels him to save himself by flight : visits Arabia : retires to St. John d'Acre, where Sheik Daher gives him every proof of friendship : returns to Cairo : sacrifices his rivals to revenge, and governs wisely. Treachery of some Beys and the grand Porte : executes the officers sent to demand his head, and combines with the Russians to take vengeance on the injustice of the Ottomans. Repels the wandering*

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*wandering Arabs: protects commerce, and conquers Arabia and Syria by his generals. Betrayed by his son-in-law, Mahamet Abou Dabab, and is obliged, a third time, to save himself in Syria. Seizes on several towns: enters Egypt with an army: overthrows forces much superior to his own, and is vanquished by the perfidy of his infantry, which goes over to Abou Dabab. Deaths of Ali, Mahamet, and Sheik Daber; the latter basely assassinated, by order of the Porte.*

TO M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**ALI BEY**, born in Natolia, in 1728, was christened *Youseph* (Joseph). His father, Daoud (*a*), a Greek priest, of one of the most distinguished families in the country, intended him as the successor of his dignities, and neglected nothing to perfect his education. Fate, however, otherwise ordained. Joseph, at thirteen, born away by the ardor of youth, hunted with some young men in a neighbouring forest, who, being attacked by banditti, were carried off in spite of their cries and resistance. He was brought to

(*a*) i. e. David.

Grand Cairo, sold to Ibrahim Kiaya (*b*), Lieutenant of the Janissaries, who had him circumcised, put him on a Mamluk habit, and called him Ali, a name he has since been known by. He appointed masters to teach him horsemanship, Turkish, and Arabic. Obligated to obey, Joseph, in his heart, lamented the loss of his parents, and the change of his religion. The kind treatment of his patron, the offices he was appointed to, which flattered his self-love, and, especially, the example of his companions, insensibly reconciled him to his new state. He was soon distinguished by his understanding; and, in a few years, was perfect master of the languages he had been taught, excelled in bodily exercise, and none of the Mamluks managed a horse with more address, threw the javelin more forcibly, or handled the sabre and fire-arms with greater dexterity. His engaging manners, and application to study, endeared him to Ibrahim, who, delighted with his talents, raised him rapidly through the various offices of his household,

(*b*) The Kiaya, and the Aga of the Janissaries, that is to say, their Lieutenant, and their Colonel, are Beys; and, usually, very powerful.

so that he presently was made Seličtar-Aga, (sword-bearer) and Khaznadar (treasurer); and the manner in which he executed these offices placed him still higher in the favor of his patron, who created him Cachef at two-and-twenty.

Become a governor of cities, he soon demonstrated his natural love of justice, and his discernment in his choice of Mamluks, whom he endeavoured to inspire with his own genius. From this time he silently laid the foundation of his future grandeur; not only had he gained the affection of Ibrahim, but insinuated himself into the favour of the Pacha, judging this might be subservient to his ambitious designs. Rahiph, the Pacha, was a man of merit; and, distinguishing an upright and elevated mind in the young Cachef, granted him his friendship, and became his declared protector: had not an unforeseen catastrophe deranged his projects, he would soon have promoted him to the dignity of Bey. Rahiph, endowed with that happy kind of character which irresistibly charms, had gained the confidence of the Beys. Far from imitating his predecessors, who founded their authority on dis-

K 2

fension,

sension, he used every effort to maintain peace and union; and, for the first time, the representative of the Grand Seignor and the heads of the government united for the public good. The people, enjoying peace, wished its duration. The Beys themselves loved the Pacha, and dreaded his recal. Nothing more was wanting to arm envy, that monster of the human heart, which, unhappily for men, sheds her venom over all parts of the earth. The council of the Divan, at Constantinople, represented the good intelligence maintained between the Pacha and the chiefs of the republic as a conspiracy, formed to deprive the Grand Seignor of Egypt. Their calumnies were speciously coloured, and specious reasons are often convincing, in a court. Without farther examination, the Sultan, determining to try the fidelity of Rahiph, sent a firman, commanding him to put all the Beys to death he could get into his power. An order so iniquitous well might shock the Pacha, but he must either obey or lose his head. He hesitated three days, and at last chose the former. Sending for the most faithful of his slaves, he shewed them the firman, and  
commanded

commanded them each to kill a Bey, when they should be assembled in the hall of audience; and, the Divan being called, having concealed swords under their robes; they assassinated those unfortunate victims of calumny. Four were left dead; the others, having been only wounded, valiantly defended themselves, and escaped. The marble of the hall where they were murdered is red with their blood to this day. I have often, shuddering, beheld the marks of this barbarous execution, commanded on suspicion only, by a despotic government.

The astonishment of the Sangiaks who had fled was extreme; nor could they account for an action so atrocious from the past conduct of Rahiph. The assembled council resolved to punish and expiate the outrage he had done the republic by his death; but, when they came to seize the culprit, he produced the firman of the Porte, and they remained satisfied by his immediate expulsion. The Pachalic of Natolia, of Damascus, and, at last, the high post of Grand Visir, were the rewards of his crime.

This melancholy event retarded the rise of Ali Bey, who remained a Cachef several

K 3

years.

years. His patron, having been elected Emir Hadge, or prince of the caravan, the second dignity in Egypt, took him with him to escort the pilgrims. They were attacked on their march by the Arabs, and Ali, at the head of the Mamluks, fell upon them with so much valour that they fled, leaving a great number dead on the field. At their return, several Arab tribes assembled to revenge their former defeat. The young Cachef gave them battle, furiously penetrated the thickest of their squadrons, and, overthrowing all who opposed him, obtained a signal victory. The Arabs appeared no more; and Ibrahim, in full council, spoke of the services of his lieutenant, and proposed to create him a Bey. This met with opposition, from Ibrahim the Circassian, the enemy of the former, who employed all his eloquence to prevent a nomination which gave him umbrage. The Emir prevailed; the Divan elected Ali, and Eddin Mohamed, the Pacha, confirmed their choice, clothed him in a caftan, and, according to custom, gave him the firman of Bey.

Become one of the twenty-four members of the republic, he never forgot his gratitude  
to

to his patron, but defended his interests with admirable constancy, who, however, was assassinated, in 1758, by the faction of Ibrahim the Circassian. From that moment Ali meditated vengeance; but for three years carefully concealed his resentment of the murder, and employed every means to obtain the post of Shiek El Balad, the first office in the republic. This dangerous wish and his utmost ambition were gratified in 1763.

He soon after revenged the death of his patron, by killing Ibrahim the Circassian, with his own hand. Hatred, rather than prudence, impelled him to commit this desperate action, which raised him up many enemies. All the Sangiaks attached to the Circassian conspired against him, and he was on the point of falling into their snares, and being massacred in his turn: he saved himself by flight. Hastily traversing the deserts of the isthmus of Suez, he came to Jerusalem, where, having gained the friendship of the governor, he thought himself in safety; but friendship itself is no longer held sacred among the Turks when the despot commands. Fearing him, even in his exile, his enemies wrote to the Porte to demand his life, and an



order was dispatched to the governor for his head. Happily for him, Rahiph, his old friend, one of the members of the Divan, informed him in time, and advised sudden flight. Ali foresaw the arrival of the Capigi Bachi (*c*), and took refuge with the Sheik Daher, Prince of St. John d'Acre. This respectable fire, who had defended his small principality fifty years against the whole Ottoman force, received the unfortunate Sheik El Balad with open arms, and granted him that hospitality which is the precious pledge of safety among men, and the sanctity of which the Arabs never violate. He soon perceived the capacity of his guest, most kindly caressed and called him his son; exhorted him to support adversity with fortitude; encouraged his hopes, calmed his griefs, and made him happy even in disgrace. Ali Bey might have lived peaceably with Sheik Daher; but, preyed upon by ambition, he could not remain thus at ease. He maintained a secret correspondence with some Sangiaks, in his interest, and, to heighten their zeal, promised them the best go-

(*c*) Messengers of the Grand Seignor; who, authorised by a firman, go to behead disgraced grandees.

vernments.

vernments. Sheik Daher also wrote to his friends at Grand Cairo, pressing them to hasten the recall of Ali Bey; and Rahiph, become Vizir, openly espoused his cause, and employed the credit he possessed to effect his re-establishment. These various means succeeded to the wish of Ali Bey. The Sangiaks invited him to return to Grand Cairo, resume his dignity, and, immediately departing, he was received amid the acclamations of the people.

Thus re-established, he was perfectly sensible of his precarious situation; knew he could not depend on tranquillity, and that hatred slumbered, but was not extinct. The thunder rumbled over his head, and those who had become disaffected after the murder of Ibrahim the Circassian, were incessantly spreading snares for him, which required all his penetration to avoid. A favourable occasion, only, was wanting for them to manifest their resentment, which the death of Rahiph, in 1765, supplied. The mask then dropped off, and they declared open war. In danger of sinking before his enemies, he fled into Arabia Felix, visited the coasts of the Red Sea, examined the state of the country,

try, and again took refuge with Sheik Daher, who received him with all his former affection. The Sheik, taught wisdom by the experience of eighty years, and a variety of fortunes, was very capable of giving consolation to the wretched. His discourse relieved the cares of his guest, encouraged him to hope for happiness, and to forget present pains. Mean time, the Sangiaks, of the faction of Ibrahim the Circassian, supposing their enemy utterly incapable of molesting them farther, abandoned themselves to every species of oppression, and persecution, towards the friends of Ali Bey; which imprudence did but increase their number, and, perceiving they had been the tools of certain ambitious Sangiaks, they resolved to strengthen themselves, by recalling their friend, the former Sheik El Balad, whom they engaged to support with all their power.

Ali Bey departed, having first received the affectionate embraces of Sheik Daher, who ardently prayed for his prosperity, and, in 1766, returned to Grand Cairo; where, consulting with his partizans, he represented to them that his former moderation had but excited the vengeance of the friends of Ibrahim,

him,

him, from whose conspiracies flight only had saved him, and that their common security required the sacrifice of the most turbulent. The resolution was, unanimously applauded, and, on the morrow, four of the proscribed were beheaded. This execution restored tranquillity to Ali; who, secure in his government, in six years, made sixteen of his Mamluks Beys, and one of them Aga of the Janissaries. The principal of these were Mahamed Abou Dahab, Ismael, Mourad, Hassan, Tentaoui, and Ibrahim. The first was his countryman, whom he had bought in 1758, and for whom he had a particular affection. Become chief of the republic, he took measures to render his power lasting. Not satisfied with encreasing his Mamluks to the number of six thousand, he also maintained ten thousand Mograbi (*d*). His discipline was severe, and, by continually exercising his troops, he formed excellent soldiers: he attached the youth of his household to himself by the parental care he took of their education, and, particular-

(*d*) Mograbi signifies western, which general name the Egyptians give to the people of the coast of Barbary.

ly, by kind behaviour, and conferring favors on the most worthy ; so that his party became so powerful that those of his colleagues, who were not his friends, feared him, and durst not oppose his designs. Imagining his authority well established, he directed his cares to the publick good. The Arabs, dispersed over the deserts, and on the frontiers of Egypt, committed ravages which an unsettled government could not repress. Against these Ali sent bodies of cavalry, that every where vanquished and drove them back to their former solitudes. Egypt now began to prosper, and encouraged agriculture flourished. The chiefs of each village were made responsible for the crimes of the whole, and punished till such time as the delinquent was rendered up to justice ; by which means the principal inhabitants watched over the public security ; and, for the first time since the Turks had governed, the merchant and the traveller might proceed over the whole country, without fear of insult. Knowing how prone mercenary soldiers are to excess, both in the capital and the provinces, he ordered the injured to direct their complaints immediately to himself,

self, and never failed to render them justice. Among the numerous instances which are related of his impartial equity, I shall mention only one. A Bey, meeting a Venetian merchant, near Old Cairo, made him alight, and forcibly took his shawl; Ali, being informed of this, summoned the culprit, severely reprimanded him in presence of the Venetian, obliged him to ask public pardon, and was near striking off his head. The same integrity observed in every part of his administration restored the golden age to the happy Egyptians, who do not cease, to this day, to bless his memory, and sing his praises.

Ali Bey had bought a female slave from Red Russia, who was very beautiful: her flaxen hair reached to the ground, her figure was tall and noble, her complexion of the purest white, her eyes blue, and her eyebrows black: but these were the least of the treasures nature had bestowed on the youthful Maria; her mind was superior to her form. Her unhappy fate never could make her condescend to gratify the desires of her master; he spoke of his power; she shewed she was free, though in chains; he wished to dazzle  
by

by his splendor; but she was insensible to pomp and grandeur. Charmed with a haughtiness so congenial to his nature, he became a lover, and offered her his hand, if she would renounce Christianity; but, though not without affection for a man who had treated her according to her deserts, she still had the fortitude to refuse. At last, he permitted her to retain her religion, provided she would not profess it publicly, and obtained her consent; and, so great was his love for her that, while he lived, he never had any other wife. Though at the summit of grandeur, Ali forgot not his parents. Having made his peace with the Porte, he confided the escort of the Khafna, which is annually sent to Constantinople, to Tentaoui, and charged him to go into Natolia, and bring back his father and family. Hearing of their arrival at Boulac, he went to meet them, with a numerous train; and, as soon as he perceived the aged Daoud, he descended from his horse, ran, and fell on his knees, and kissed his feet. The father wept with joy; it was the happiest day of his life, and Ali embraced his sister and nephew. This tender scene

scene over, he conducted them to his palace, in the square of Lesbekia (*e*), and the Mamluks contended who should wash the feet of their master's father. When they had cloathed him in magnificent robes, he was led into the harem, and received the most affectionate caresses from the wife of Ali. Daoud, mounted on a fine horse, was conducted to the hall of the Divan; the Beys, and even the Pacha, complimented and made him presents. After remaining seven months in Egypt, he wished to return to his native country, whither Ali sent him, on board a vessel, loaded with riches, but detained his sister and nephew. You perceive, Sir, incidents which have a great resemblance to the history of Joseph are often renewed in Egypt (*f*).

The Sheik El Balad, desirous of giving a still farther proof of his friendship for Mahamed Abou Dahab, and attaching him by

(*e*) The largest square in Cairo, where most of the Beys have palaces.

(*f*) And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet his father in Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. Genesis XLVI. 29.

indissoluble



indissoluble ties, gave him his sister in marriage, and the nuptials were celebrated, during three days, by illuminations, horse races, and banquetting. He was but heaping benefits on a traitor, who silently conspired the ruin of his benefactor. Secretly uniting himself to the remains of the house of Ibrahim, he aspired to sovereign power; corrupted by ambition, and the love of gold (*g*), he thought no means unjust by which he might attain the dignity of Sheik El Balad. The Beys of his faction, knowing his avarice, gave him considerable sums to rid them of Ali; but he, conscious of his brother's vigilance, the love of his adherents, and the difficulties of the enterprize, fearing for his life if he were discovered, kept the gold, and waited a more favorable opportunity; but, in order to ingratiate himself, and blind his friend still farther, he discovered the conspiracy. The consequences exceeded his hopes, and the affection of Ali, for the man to whom he thought he owed his life, became excessive. Abou Dahab, however, never lost sight of his detestable intents, but endeavoured

(*g*) He had been named *Abou Daba*, father of Gold, on account of his avarice.

to seduce Tentaoui, and offered him twelve thousand guineas to assassinate his patron, when they should play at chess. Tentaoui immediately informed Ali of the proposal, at which, so much was he prejudiced in favor of Mahamed, he did but laugh. Failing in this project, he tried another, and wished to force his wife to poison a brother she loved in a dish of coffee. She rejected the proposal with horror, and sent a faithful slave to conjure Ali to keep on his guard, and to fear Abou Dahab as his most dangerous enemy. So many warnings ought to have rendered him suspicious, but his affection was extreme; nor could he credit crimes which his heart disclaimed: beside that the benefits he had conferred rendered him confident.

In 1768, the Russians declared war against the Turks, and sent their fleets into the Mediterranean. The Sheik El Balad, according to custom, raised twelve thousand men to aid the Porte, which circumstance his enemies endeavoured to turn to his destruction. They wrote to the Divan that the troops he had assembled were to serve in the Russian armies, with whom he had entered into an alliance, and the letter was signed by several

of the Beys. The calumny was credited, without examination, and a Capigi-bachi immediately sent, with four attendants, for the head of Ali. Happily for him, he had a faithful agent in the council, who immediately sent off two couriers, the one by land, the other by sea, to advertise him of the treachery. They outstripped the messengers of the Grand Seigneur, and Ali sent for Tentaoui, in whom he had great confidence, informed him of the secret, ordered him to assume the disguise of an Arab, and, with twelve Mamluks, wait the arrival of the messengers from Constantinople twenty miles from Cairo, seize their dispatches, and put them to death. Tentaoui performed his mission: having waited, some time, at the appointed place, he saw the Capigi-bachi and his attendants approach, seized them and their fatal order, murdered them, and buried their bodies in the sand.

Having the firman in his possession, the Sheik El Balad assembled the Beys; and, after reading it to them, said “ How long shall  
“ we be the victims of Ottoman despotism;  
“ or what faith can we put in the treaties of  
“ the Porte? Not many years since several

“ of the Beys were assassinated, contrary to  
 “ all justice : some of you were present, and  
 “ bear about with you the marks of that  
 “ massacre. The marble, we tread on, is  
 “ red with the blood of four of your col-  
 “ leagues. To-day I am to die, and to-  
 “ morrow the man who shall supply my  
 “ place. The hour is come for us to shake  
 “ off this tyrant’s yoke ; who, violating our  
 “ privileges and laws, dispenses with our  
 “ lives at his pleasure. Let us unite our-  
 “ selves with Russia, and free the republic  
 “ from the dominion of a barbarous master.  
 “ Grant me your aid, and I will be respon-  
 “ sible for the liberty of Egypt.”

This speech produced every effect Ali  
 could expect : sixteen Beys, who were of his  
 party, unanimously declared for making war  
 on the Grand Seignor ; and the remainder,  
 unable to oppose, promised every assistance  
 in their power. The Pacha was immediately  
 ordered to quit Egypt in four and twenty  
 hours, and Ali sent to Sheik Daher to inform  
 him of what had passed ; promising to unite  
 his troops to those of the Sheik, for the  
 conquest of Syria.

As soon as the Porte heard of the rebellion of the Beys, and the storm that threatened Syria, the Pacha of Damascus was ordered to attack Sheik Daher, before the latter had been joined by the forces of Egypt; who accordingly marched, with twenty thousand men hastily assembled, to surprize St. John d'Acre. The Sheik had all his life been accustomed to war with the Turks, and was not alarmed at their approach: he mounted his horse, called his seven sons, who all commanded fortified castles, and immediately marched at the head of nine thousand cavalry. While one of his sons harraided the enemy with a body of light horse, Sheik Daher took post near the lake of Tiberias. Informed of all their motions, when he knew the Turks would soon arrive, he separated his troops into three divisions; the two first were ordered to hide themselves among the mountains, till the signal should be given; he himself retired to some distance, deserting his camp on the plain, full of provisions. When night approached, the Pacha, imagining he should surprize the Arabs, advanced, silently, concealed by darkness, and the few  
troops,

troops, left in the camp, hastily fled, after a light skirmish, on his arrival. Their flight was attributed to their fears, and the soldiers, heated by a forced march, regarded the abandoned provisions as lawful conquest, and eagerly drank the wine. At break of day, the signal was given, and the three bodies of cavalry suddenly attacked the camp, sword in hand, where, finding none but drunken men, their only trouble was to slaughter them. Eight thousand were slain, a great number made prisoners, and the flying Pacha, who took refuge in Damascus, lost his tents, arms, and baggage. A courier was dispatched to Grand Cairo, with the news of his overthrow, by Sheik Daher, who returned into his principality.

His ally thus in safety, Ali turned his arms elsewhere. Traversing Yemen, and the eastern coast of the Red Sea, he had perceived how many advantages might be gained by commerce, and the productions of those countries, could he subdue them; he therefore raised two armies, both of cavalry, the first containing twenty-six, and the other nine thousand men. The command of the great army was given to his brother-in-law,

and of the second to Ismael Bey, who was to attack the maritime towns, and sea ports, while Abou Dahab entered Arabia Felix, and the interior provinces. The plan they were to follow was delivered to the generals, and he equipped a fleet, to coast along the Red Sea, and bring them provisions. Like an able warrior, he had calculated what the obstacles were they had to surmount, and success depended on the fidelity with which his orders should be executed. The troops left Grand Cairo in 1770; and, while they marched to conquer Arabia, the Sheik El Balad remained in the capital, where he employed himself in the interior government of the kingdom, and the people's happiness.

The custom duties, in Egypt, had long been in the hands of Jews, who committed flagrant depredations, and imposed on foreign merchants with impunity. Ali, therefore, intrusted them to the administration of the Christians of Syria, expressly recommending them to favour the Europeans: well convinced how flourishing Egypt might become by commerce, his project was to lay the trade open to the whole world, and render this country the emporium of the merchants  
of

of Europe, India, and Africa. To effect this, it was necessary to defend caravans by his forces, and merchants by the laws; which he did by repelling the wandering Arabs on all sides, and establishing Selim Aga, and Soliman Kiaya, of the Janissaries, at Grand Cairo, to protect the merchants, and see they had justice done them. In like manner, he commanded his generals to leave officers in the sea ports they took; who should welcome the ships of India, and guard them against the cupidity of the inhabitants. He soon enjoyed the wisdom of his administration, soon had the happiness to see the Egyptians relieved, foreigners well treated, public safety established, agriculture encouraged, and the republic raised to a point of splendor which it had never known.

While occupied by these cares, his generals triumphed in Arabia. Abou Dahab, in one campaign, conquered Yemen, and dethroned the Schereif of Mecca, instituting Emir Abdallah in his place; who, to ingratiate himself with Ali, gave him the pompous title of Sultan of Egypt and the two seas. Ismael, on his part, took all the towns on the eastern coast of the Arabian gulph. They returned



to Cairo, loaded with laurels ; where they were received with the loudest acclamations, and their victories celebrated by great rejoicings.

Ali forgot not the expedition into Syria, but sent Abou Dahab thither, in 1771, with forty thousand men, to attempt its conquest. While the army traversed the desert, vessels from Damietta conveyed such provisions as were needful for its support to St. John d'Acre. Profiting, like a skilful politician, by present circumstances, he wrote to Count Orlov, then at Leghorn, to form a treaty of alliance with the Empress of Russia, offering the admiral money, provisions, and soldiers : he asked gunners and engineers in return, promising to join his forces with those of Russia, to the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire. The Count thanked Ali, encouraged him in the glorious enterprize, made him great promises, which he never performed, and assured him he would send his dispatches to his sovereign.

The year before, he had deputed a Venetian merchant, named Rosetti, to offer the republic of Venice his alliance, and encourage her to retake the islands, and fine provinces,  
the

she had formerly possessed, in the Mediterranean, from the Turks; promising to aid her with all the forces of Egypt, and re-establish her ancient commerce; which daring attempt the republic thought proper to decline.

During these negotiations, Abou Dahab, aided by the council and arms of the prince of Acre, took the cities of Syria from the Ottomans, and drove them before him like sheep. On the ninth of march he came to the walls of Gaza, strongly garrisoned; which, three days after, he carried by assault. Rama cost him more time and trouble; the besieged defended themselves so intrepidly that he could not take it by storm; it capitulated after a month's blockade, and the governor fled, fearing the fate that awaited him. The Turks durst not be seen in the field, but sheltered themselves behind their walls; and the victor, after these two conquests, laid siege to Naplouse, formerly Neapolis. The obstinacy of the besieged, and the ignorance of the Egyptians in the art of gunnery, made this a work of time. They long attacked the walls, without great success, and Abou Dahab, despairing of storming it,

it, contracted his lines, and took it by famine. His arms were next turned against Jerusalem, which the Mahometans, as well as Christians, call the Holy City, and hold in great veneration ; pretending that Mahomet was miraculously transported thither, where he prayed with the company of the prophets (*b*). The governor and high priest, summoned to surrender, sent a deputation, with presents, conjuring him to turn the tempest from the walls of Jerusalem, respect the place in which the prophet had prayed, and assured him, that, if he reduced Damascus, they would follow the example of the capital, and open their gates. The Egyptian general acquiesced in their prayer, and led his troops to Jaffa, the antient Joppa. This town is built on a rock that projects into the sea, and its advantageous situation, and fortifications, made the siege long, and bloody. Abou Dahab two months battered the walls with his whole artillery ; but, as this was neither considerable, nor under the direction

(*b*) Praise be to God, who, in the night, carried his servant from the temple of Mecca to the temple of Jerusalem ; the walls of which we have blessed, that marks of our power might there remain. Koran, chap. 17.

of good engineers, he made no great breaches. The Egyptians repeatedly returned to the assault, and the brave Mamluks mounted the ramparts, but were repelled with loss. However, the besieged having perished in part, the remainder, fearing to be put to the sword, if the place were taken by storm, capitulated. Leaving a garrison here, the general returned to St. John d'Acre, in the beginning of September, where the Arab prince received him joyfully, congratulated and supplied him with provisions and ammunition.

Mahamed, having given his troops a fortnight's rest, attacked Seide, the ancient Sidon, near which the city of Tyre, famous for its commerce, arts, and shipping, formerly flourished. The island where it stood is now part of the main land, and presents nothing but ruins. Seide yielded at the first summons, and Abou Dahab, now master of the most important places in Syria, led his army before its capital. Damascus, situated in a rich plain, is surrounded by rivulets, and gardens full of orange, pistachio, pomegranate, and a multitude of other trees, the fruits of which are delicious. Excellent paste is made from them, which is used in  
the

the composition of sherbet, and sold all over the east. Nothing can be more pleasant, more charming, more beautiful, than the environs of this city. Bowers and brooks are every where seen ; and delightful pavilions, where Turkish indolence slumbers, on cushions of velvet and fatten. The Arabs call it *Esghams*, the city of the sun. The waters are admirable for tempering steel ; and the poniards, sabres, and arms they fabricate, are every where famous. The Pacha had shut himself up with a numerous garrison, and courageously defended the place for two months ; but, at the end of November, seeing his walls beat down, his advanced forts destroyed, and the enemy ready to storm, he fled, during the night, and the city yielded. The garrison had retired into the citadel ; which, after a second siege, and many efforts, the Egyptians at last took.

Aleppo was the only considerable place the Turks possessed, and the taking this city would have given the republic of Egypt possession of Syria ; but Abou Dahab feared this conquest would but retard his designs. The ruin of Ali, his patron, brother, and friend, he long had meditated ; and the desire of  
gaining

gaining the soldiers, and making them the companions of his success, had armed and guided him in his victories. Neither the interest of Egypt nor its union with Syria, which would have rendered it independent of the Porte, were any part of his project. When he was sure of his officers and soldiers, and had made them take an oath of fidelity, he reared the standard of rebellion, withdrew the garrisons from the subjected towns, and, rendering thus a year of battles and effusion of blood fruitless, returned to Egypt. No sooner was he gone than the Turks easily retook the towns they had lost, repaired the walls, and added new fortifications. Inflated as he was with success, Abou Dahab durst not directly attempt the capital, where his rival was so powerful, but coasted the western borders of the Red Sea, crossed the desert, and entered Upper Egypt. His guilty purpose thus manifested, he seized on Girga, and the most important towns; gained, by force or address, the Beys who governed them, and descended toward Grand Cairo.

Ali Bey too late repented having followed rather the emotions of his heart than the counsels

counsels of prudence, by giving an enemy so perfidious a command with which he ought never to have been entrusted. He still, however, had resources, which he immediately employed; and, assembling twenty thousand men, made *Ismael Bey* their general, on whose experience and fidelity he had reason to depend. Abou Dahab was encamped near Giza, and Ali ordered his general to take post at Old Cairo, and prevent the enemy from crossing the river. Nothing was more easy; but the perfidious Ismael, basely betraying his patron's interest, allied himself with, and went over to, Abou Dahab. The junction of the two armies was a thunder-stroke to the generous Ali, who, in the first moments of despair, resolved to shut himself up in the castle of Grand Cairo, with a few brave friends who remained, and bury himself under its ruins. The sons of Sheik Daher, who loved him, shewed the folly of such a resolution, and conjured him to fly, with them, to St. John d'Acre. He felt the wisdom of the advice, and profited by it. He wrote immediately to Count Orlov, praying him to send ammunition and officers into Syria, and entrusted these dispatches to

Jacob

Jacob the Armenian, who had already acquitted himself of a similar commission. Ali then collected his treasure, with which he loaded twenty camels, and sent to demand of Mallem Reisk, whom he had made receiver of the revenues, the money in his possession; but the knave had hid himself, and to find him was impossible. Ali Bey, a third time, fled from Grand Cairo, in the middle of the night, across the deserts; accompanied by the sons of Sheik Daher, Tentaoui, Rossuan, Hassan, Kalil, Mourad, Abderrohman, Latif, Mustapha, Ibrahim, Zulficar, Hasheph, Osman, Selim Aga, and Soliman Kiaya, of the janissaries, all Beys of his creation, and about seven thousand soldiers. He took with him three millions and a half of money, in gold and silver; and, after a forced march of five days, arrived, the 16th of April, 1772, before the gates of Gaza, where his troops began to take breath. The treason of two men, on whom he had so many claims, preyed upon his heart: he shuddered at the very name of Abou Dahab, and his blood boiled in his veins. This agitation, and the fatigue of a march so painful, occasioned him to fall dangerously



dangerously ill; when, yielding to the most gloomy melancholy, he expected consolation in death. Egypt freed, Arabia subjected, justice established in the cities, commerce flourishing, the good he had done the people, and the good he still desired to do them, all vanished in a moment, and the recollection was the worst of his woes. While his heart was thus torn, by griefs so piercing, the respectable sire, Sheik Daher, his faithful friend, his constant protector in adversity, came to visit him in his tent, mingled his tears with those of Ali, called him his son, and endeavoured, by discourse equally wise and affectionate, to relieve his pangs. He told him he ought not yet to despair; the Russian squadron approached, and, with this assistance, he might remount the throne whence treason had cast him down. Powerful is the voice of friendship over the affectionate heart. It is a salutary balm that glides and pervades the faculties, and cures, as by enchantment, the wounds of mind and body: Ali felt its divine effects, and hope once more relumined the torch of life. The Arab prince had his physician with him, whom

whom he left with the patient, and who, in some weeks, recovered his health.

A detachment from the Russian squadron having appeared before St. John d'Acre, Ali profited by the occasion to write to Count-Orlow; repeating his former proposals, asking cannon, gunners, and a body of three thousand Albanians, assuring him that, when re-established at Grand Cairo, the whole force of Egypt should be at his command. He likewise addressed a letter to the Czarina, soliciting her alliance, and proposing a treaty of commerce with Egypt. Zulficar Bey bore these dispatches, and with them a present of three fine horses, richly accoutered, to the Russian Admiral. Certain it is, had Russia sent this small succour to the Sheik El Balad, he would have triumphed over his enemies, and been proclaimed King of Egypt; nor can it be doubted that gratitude would have induced him to have put the commerce of the east into the hands of the Russians, and would have ceded to them the ports on the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean. The face of these countries would have been changed. The Russian ships sailed for Paros

the 18th of May, 1772, taking the ambassador of Ali on board.

The hasty retreat of Abou Dahab had given the Turks time to return, and fortify themselves in their towns; from which Ali again attempted to drive them. Having collected a body of six thousand men, he gave the command to the brave Tentaoui, with an order to attack Seide. Sheik Lebi, and Sheik Crim, the one the son, the other son-in-law, of the prince of Acre, joined the Bey, and they marched together. Hassan *Pacha*, in an advantageous post, waited for them, at the head of thirteen thousand men; but, notwithstanding their inferiority, they did not hesitate to give him battle. Their cavalry was excellent; they fell impetuously upon the Turks, whom they broke, killed a great number, and put the rest to flight. The fugitives spread the alarm in Seide, which immediately opened its gates to the victors. Tentaoui, leaving a garrison in the town, under the command of Hassan *Bey*, returned to the camp, where he received the compliments of Ali, and the prince of Acre.

The

The 13th of August, in the same year, Ali marched against Jaffa, accompanied by the valiant sons of Sheik Daher, who had equipped two vessels to carry stores and provisions for the besiegers. The governor was summoned to surrender, and, on his refusal, the town besieged. The walls were battered for forty days; but Ali's feeble artillery made very inconsiderable breaches: the signal of assault was nevertheless given, and the soldiers advanced with intrepidity; but the difficulty of scaling the walls, and the valour of the besieged, forced them to retreat. Finding he could not carry it by storm, he resolved to take it by famine; and, during the blockade, sent Tentaoui, with a detachment of cavalry, to take Gaza by surprise. The brave chief flew to the place, took it at the first onset, left a garrison, and returned to the camp, crowned with laurel. The people of Jaffa received succour by sea, and resolutely defended themselves. The only thing they were in absolute want of was wood. The country round is delightful, and scattered over with gardens, where the orange and citron extend their charming shades, watered by abundant springs, which

descend from the mountain, and make their verdure eternal. These trees are loaded with fruit, during one part of the year, and Ali had spared them; but, perceiving the besieged cut them down, and carried them off, under favor of the darkness, he had them felled immediately, and destroyed those pleasant plantations.

Mean time Ali's ambassador, Jacob, returned from his mission on board an English vessel, commanded by Capt. Brown. Count Orlov sent him two Russian officers, and dispatches assuring him of his friendship, and promising powerful assistance. These officers presented Ali, on the part of the Admiral, three pieces of cannon, that would carry four-pound balls, seven barrels of powder, and five hundred bullets; and here ended the magnificent promises of Count Orlov.

The siege continued, and Clinglinoff, the Russian captain, raised a new battery of three pieces, carrying twelve-pound balls, with which he greatly annoyed the city. Having beat down a part of the wall, and wishing to see the effect of the artillery, he was killed by a musquet ball, as he was looking through

through an embrasure. This brave officer had, a little before, embarked with a single man, during night, to burn the Turkish vessels, which anchored in the harbour; being discovered, before he could execute his design, the fire from the ramparts obliged him precipitately to retire.

Captain Brown added six more cannon to those which already played upon the city, and practicable breaches were made. Ali founded the charge, and his troops mounted to the assault; but ardent as they were, the numerous and valiant garrison, which continually received reinforcements by sea, obliged them to retreat. Several Russian ships approached Jaffa, at the request of Ali, and, bombarding it for two days, beat down a part of the houses: but, fearing a lee-shore, if the west winds should blow with violence, they left this dangerous road. These multiplied attacks reduced the besieged to great extremities. Their city was laid in ruins; the terrified governor fled, in the night; and, escaping the vengeance of his enemies, got to Naplous, where his brother commanded. On the morrow, the 31st of January, Ali entered the city. This san-

guinary siege cost him three Beys and an infinite number of Mamluks. He gave the place up to Sheik Daher, who had supplied his army with provisions and stores.

While he lay before Jaffa, Mallem Reik, the receiver-general of Egypt, came to his tent, disguised like a dervise: his sun-burnt face, meagre looks, and dirty and ragged dress, disguised him effectually. His story was that, as soon as he learned the success of Abou Dahab, fearing the avarice of the traitor, he hid his money, and fled to the deserts; where, for a whole year, he had lived a miserable life. Ali saw him unfortunate, pitied him, forgot his perfidy, and gave him cloaths and money. The camp was a witness, at the same time, of another example of the vicissitude of human affairs. Emir Abdallah, who, by order of Ali, had been raised to the principality of Mecca, the office of Scheriff, came to implore his aid. His rival was re-established, and he constrained to fly. Ali consoled and loaded him with presents, and he returned to Medina. Thus, the fall of the chief of Egypt entails misfortune on all who are attached to his party.

The

The Sheik El Balad next led his troops to Rama, which was carried sword in hand; and this success raised the hopes of his partizans, and made them confident they should re-enter Grand Cairo triumphant. Ali had constantly kept up a correspondence with the chiefs of the Janissaries, whose power in the capital is great; and his promises, and the aversion the avarice of Abou Dahab inspired, determined them openly to espouse his cause, and demand his recal. They wrote him word he might return, and they would defend his interests. This news gave him great joy; he communicated it to his friends, and prepared for Egypt. Sheik Daher was of a contrary opinion, and advised him to wait the promised aid of Russia, foment dissension among the Beys, make himself more certain of the temper of the troops, and neither lightly hazard his fortune nor his life. These prudent counsels were not followed: Ali, impatient to return to Grand Cairo, and humble his foes, thought himself marching to victory. Collecting the garrisons of the conquered towns, and raising contributions, he arrived at Gaza the 21st of March, and left it the 4th of April, 1773.



His whole cavalry consisted of two thousand men, and two hundred and fifty Mamluks. Three thousand four hundred Mograbi composed his infantry. Tentaoui, Kalil, Latif, Hassan, Abderrohman, Mourad, Selim Aga, and Soliman Kiaya, of the janissaries, were the only remaining Beys. Six hundred and sixty horse, commanded by the son and son-in-law of Sheik Daher, joined this small army; the amount of which was six thousand three hundred men.

Abou Dahab had sent twelve thousand men to Salakia, a town on the isthmus of Suez, to impede Ali's march; which troops immediately advanced, at his approach, in order of battle. The Sheik El Balad staid not to hesitate, but fell like lightning upon them, fighting, sabre in hand, at the head of the Mamluks, who, encouraged by his presence, carried death throughout the ranks. The enemy stood this terrible shock four hours; at last, being every where broken, they fled to the deserts, leaving a great number dead on the field. This glorious victory animated the small army of Ali, who, led by so brave a chief, thought themselves invincible. Profiting by their ardeur, he marched

marched directly for Grand Cairo, where the fugitives spread the news of their defeat, and his approach. Abou Dahab assembled the Beys of his faction, and the heads of the people, to whom he thus spake:

“ Valiant chiefs of the Republic, and you Egyptians, who cherish the law of our prophet, you are acquainted with Ali. He is a Christian in his heart, has allied himself to infidels, and wishes to conquer that he may extirpate the religion of Mahomet, and force you to embrace Christianity. Recollect what the Europeans have done in India. The mussulmen of those rich countries welcomed them kindly, received them in their ports, granted them counting houses, and formed treaties of trade with them. What was the consequence? Christians have ravaged their provinces, destroyed their cities, conquered their kingdoms, and, after reducing them to slavery, have established idolatry on the ruins of the true religion (*i*). A similar fate attends you, faithful mussulmen. Allied with Europeans, Ali will overthrow your government, lay Egypt open to infidels, and force

(*i*) The Mahometans call us idolaters, because, unable to comprehend our mysteries, they say we worship several Gods.

YOU

you to become Christians. Assist me to repel the enemy of the republic, of the laws, of Islamism, or expect all the evils which your brethren of Bengal have endured: chuse between him and me."

So ending, Abou Dahab pretended to retire and abdicate the dignity of Sheik El Balad; but the audience universally denounced curses on the head of Ali, and promised to shed their last drop of blood in the common cause. Abou Dahab, profiting by the enthusiasm of the moment, proclaimed, throughout the city, that whoever loved his religion and country must take arms; and, before night, twenty thousand men enlisted under his banner; at the head of which army he immediately departed, to attack his enemy. The janissaries, faithful to their promise, refused to follow, and tranquilly waited the success of the battle.

This was an unexpected event to Ali, who, informed that Abou Dahab was advancing with an army thrice as numerous as his own, abandoned himself to despair, and fell dangerously ill. He was advised to return to St. John d'Acre, but he declared he would die rather than retreat a step.

The

The 13th of April, 1773, the army from Grand Cairo came in sight of his camp, and he arranged his troops in order of battle. Sheik Lebi and Sheik Crim commanded the left wing, Tentaoui the right, and his infantry occupied the centre. These prudent dispositions made, he exhorted his chiefs to fight valiantly, and ordered himself to be carried into his tent, for he was so weak he could not sit on horseback. The battle began about eleven in the morning; both charged with fury, and, notwithstanding the inferiority of Ali's forces, they, at first, had the advantage. Sheik Lebi and Sheik Crim gloriously repulsed the Egyptian cavalry; and Tentaoui and his brave Mamluks overthrew all before them. Victory had declared for Ali when the Mograbi, mercenary troops, who always fight for the lust of gain, corrupted by the magnificent promises of Abou Dahab, went over to his side, and the face of fortune was changed. The flying rallied, and, having only three thousand men to encounter, surrounded them on all sides, and made great slaughter. The generous Tentaoui could not survive the defeat. He pierced the thickest squadrons, and fell, covered

vered with wounds, on a heap of dead himself had immolated. Sheik Lebi, the valorous son of the Prince of Acre, long defended himself, with his Arabs, and fell combating. Sheik Crim, cutting a passage through the Egyptians, galloped, full speed, to the tent of Ali, and conjured him to fly to St. John d'Acre. Mourad, Ibrahim, Soliman, and Abderroman, arrived also, and made the like remonstrances. Ali answered, fly my friends : I command you : as for me, my hour is come. Scarcely had they quitted him before he was surrounded by the victorious troops. The Mamluks, who guarded his tent, defended their master to their last drop of blood, and all perished with their arms in their hands. Despair gave strength to the unfortunate Sheik El Balad ; he rose, and killed the two first soldiers who attempted to seize him : they then fired, and he was wounded with two balls. The Lieutenant of Abou Dahab entering, sabre in hand, Ali, firing his pistol, ended him. Bathed in his blood, he fought like a lion ; but, a soldier behind bringing him down with his sabre, they fell upon him, and carried him to the tent of the victor. The traitor, perfidious to the last, shed  
feigned

feigned tears, at beholding him thus, and endeavoured to yield him consolation. Ali turned away his eyes, and spake not a word. He died, a week after, of his wounds; though some have informed me they were not mortal, but that he was poisoned by his infamous brother-in-law; if so, this was the completion of his atrocious acts; nor can we reflect, without shuddering, on the horrors which ambition will impel men to commit.

Ali was above the middle size: his eyes were large and full of fire, his manner was noble and winning, and his character frank and generous. Nature had endowed him with unconquerable fortitude, and an elevated genius. Far from that barbarous pride which leads the Turks to condemn foreigners, he loved them for their talents, and liberally rewarded their services. His desire to obtain officers, to discipline his troops, and teach them European tactics, was great; he fell the victim of friendship, and his misfortunes were the consequence of having nurtured a traitor, who profited by his benefactions to embitter and rob him of life. Had Russia accepted his offers, and granted him engineers, with three or four thousand men, he would

would have subdued Syria and Egypt, and yielded the commerce of Arabia and India into the hands of his ally. He perished at the age of forty-five; the Egyptians wept his death, and saw themselves again the victims of miseries from which he had delivered them.

When Sheik Daher was informed of the death of Ali, and his son, he abandoned himself to affliction. The unfortunate sire fell prostrate on the earth, covered himself with dust, and shed torrents of tears. It was soon necessary to defend his life and his country. Vain of his victory, Abou Dahab wished to revenge the protection the Arabian prince had given Ali, and marched for Syria with the whole force of Egypt, leaving Ismael governor in his absence. Jaffa was the first place attacked, and courageously defended by Sheik Crim, which lengthened the siege. Unfortunately, a European, whom the promises of Abou Dahab had gained, sunk a mine, by which a great part of the walls were thrown down; and the Egyptians, entering the breach, put the inhabitants to the sword. After this barbarity, they marched for St. John d'Acre, which Sheik Daher, who

who loved his people, and dreaded they might find a fate equally cruel, after advising them to open their gates to the conqueror, abandoned; flying to the mountains, with his sons. Abou Dahab, finding no resistance, spared the effusion of blood; but, imagining the monks of Nazareth were entrusted with the treasures of the prince, he sent for, and commanded them to deliver them up, immediately. In vain did these poor people protest they had no knowledge of any treasure; he beheaded three of them, and, not satisfied with this, put Mallem Ibrahim Saba, the receiver of Sheik Daher, to the torture, under which he expired, that he might force a discovery of these imaginary treasures. Some of the sons of the Arab prince underwent a similar fate, with no better success.

Here ended the crimes of Abou Dahab; he was one morning found dead in his bed. Some pretend he was poisoned, by one of his slaves; but this is uncertain. When the news was known, the Egyptian troops returned to Grand Cairo, and Ismael was elected Sheik El Balad. The prince of Acre immediately left the mountains, and again entered his principality, where he was received



ceived by the people with shouts, rejoicings, and solemn feasts.

While these things were transacting, a Turkish squadron cast anchor on the coast of Syria, and the Capitan Pacha, having obtained the Sheik Daher's permission to visit him, brought a firman from the Grand Seignor which, pardoning the past, confirmed the sovereignty of Acre on him and his descendants. The joy of the aged prince was excessive. Now near the grave, he said he should die without regret, having the power which he had purchased by sixty years labours, and wars, made legitimate. The Turkish admiral was magnificently treated, and loaded with presents; and, after testifying his thanks, entreated the Sheik Daher, before he went, to come and dine on board the fleet. After the firman he had received, the Arab prince, unsuspecting of meditated treason, accepted his invitation, and, as he came on board, being first saluted by a discharge of the artillery, was, the moment after, shewn another firman, which the admiral drew from his bosom, that condemned him to death, and he was beheaded.

ed (*k*). The respectable fire, thus basely betrayed, was eighty-six years of age, and adored by the people, whom all his life he had defended against the tyranny of Pachas. Thus the Divan treats the Grandees of the Empire. But a government obliged to employ such means, to recal princes and governors to their duty, betrays its impotence; and, having no arms to defend its provinces, except perfidy, is on the brink of ruin. When corrupted by effeminacy, flattery, and a spirit of bigotry, the Greek Emperors destroyed all those at whom they took umbrage with fire and sword, it was not long before they were dethroned, and Constantinople became the habitation of a more generous people. The Ottomans use similar means, at present, and may expect a similar fate. I believe such

(*k*) Such was the manner in which Sheik Daher was assassinated, according to what I heard in Egypt, two years after his death; but the following note, which was communicated to me by the commander of La Bourdonnaie Monluc, may perhaps rectify this mistake. “The Captain-Pacha, lying before the walls of St. John d’Acre with the Turkish fleet, cannonaded the town some days, from which Sheik Daher fled among the mountains. The commander of his cavalry betrayed him, cut off his head, and brought it to the Ottoman Admiral.”

reflexions to be just ; because, attentively consulting the annals of history, we always behold kingdoms decline with the virtue and morals of their inhabitants.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R   X I.

## SEQUEL OF THE LIFE OF ALI BEY.

*The History of Ismael Bey, become Sheik El Balad. Mourad and Ibrahim, Beys in upper Egypt, connect themselves with the Arabs; and, Ismael sending troops against them, retire to the desert, fortify themselves, seize the principal towns of the Said, proceed to Giza, and make a treaty of alliance with Ismael. In danger of being massacred in Grand Cairo, they fly to Girga, call in the Arabs, and defeat the soldiers Ismael sends to give them battle. He comes himself: they bribe his army, and the Sheik El Balad escapes to Syria, with his treasure. Returned to Cairo, they appoint their own creatures Beys, and lord it over Egypt. Battle with Hassan Bey, in the streets of Grand Cairo, and its consequences. Mourad conducts the caravan of Mecca, and beheads the Arabs who demand the usual tribute. Attacked and wounded, he obliges the enemy to retreat. His quarrels with Ibrahim.*

## L E T T E R S

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HOPE, Sir, a narrative of the events which followed the death of Ali Bey, most of which I myself have seen, will afford you amusement. After the decease of this valiant chief, and that of Abou Dahab, Ismael tranquilly reaped the fruit of his treason, was elected Sheik El Balad, and reigned sovereign of Egypt. Distributing provinces to his creatures, he beheld none but dependants; and, to secure dominion, obtained the support of the Pacha, an adroit and enterprising man. Having gained him, and the officers of the janissaries, he dispatched his orders throughout Egypt, and his will was law. Educated by Ali, he knew the trade of war, possessed courage, and a great knowledge of business. But these qualities were tarnished by avarice. Gold was gathered from all parts, and, instead of exerting himself for the people's good and the state's glory, he thought but of increasing his treasures. While he supposed he had nothing to fear, Mourad and Ibrahim were  
ardently

ardently desirous of revenging the death of their patron. The first was courageous, frank, passionate, and inconsiderate. The second, having more coolness and finesse, was more able in forming of factions. After vowing friendship, they left Syria, with a small number of Mamluks who followed their fortunes, crossed the deserts, and entered the Said, where, before they could obtain partizans, Ismael sent an army against them. Mourad, with a handful of soldiers, wished to give battle; but the more prudent Ibrahim prevented him, and they retired to solitudes whither the enemy durst not follow. Here they attached an independent Arab prince to their interests, by promising to enlarge his estates if, through his assistance, they should re-enter the capital. The Emir, happy to grant protection to exiled Beys against Ismael, who wanted to levy contributions on his territories, swore to aid them with all his power, and, immediately, ordered his Arabs to take arms: six thousand horse joined his standard, with which small army they coasted the river side, seizing the principal towns on its banks, and approached Grand Cairo. After vanquishing various

detachments Ismael had sent, they came, in 1777, and encamped near Gifa. The Sheik El Balad left the castle, at the head of a numerous army, to prevent their passing the Nile. While the armies were in sight of each other, the generals reciprocally sent deputies, and spoke of accommodation. Ismael, fearing the impetuous valour of Mourad, and the prudence of Ibrahim, would not risque his fortune on the fate of a battle, and offered them their rank as members of the republic. Peace, accordingly, was signed, and they entered the capital, preceded by the Arab prince, who, on a stately horse, marched at the head of his cavalry, armed with sabres and lances. After three days stay at Grand Cairo, and seeing the purpose of his coming effected, he returned to his principality, loaded with presents and promises. This reconciliation was not sincere. Ismael had invited his enemies that he might destroy them without fighting, and, possessed of wealth and power, thought his design might easily be accomplished. Dangers surrounded the new Beys, and great address was necessary to escape the snares laid for them. In 1778, the Sheik El Balad, fear-

ing,

ing, should he attack them in their palaces, where they were on their guard, the people would rise in defence of the remains of the house of Ali, in conjunction with the Pacha and his partizans, determined to massacre them, the first day they should come to the Divan. They were informed of this plot, and escaped, during night, into Upper Egypt, fortified themselves in Girga, called in the Arabs, and resolutely waited for the enemy. Ismael sent a body of horse to pursue them, whom the fugitives defeated. He then came himself, with thirty thousand men, and, confident in his strength, supposed victory certain; but the cunning Ibrahim employed the same trick which had been so serviceable to Abou Dahab. Knowing Ismael's avarice, and that the pay of his troops was bad, he offered one much more considerable, with a promise to promote the officers. Nothing more was necessary to seduce a part of those mercenary troops, who always sell themselves to the best bidders. Ismael no sooner perceived himself abandoned than he hastily fled to Grand Cairo, loaded fifty camels with gold, silver, and his most precious effects, and, escaping across the isthmus, took



refuge in Syria. Ever since, the wretch, justly punished for having betrayed his friend and master, has dragged a miserable being through the various provinces of the Ottoman empire. I have been assured that, going to Constantinople, and depending on the promises of the Porte, whose authority he had re-established in Egypt, the Divan, having seized his treasures, gave him up to his miserable fate.

Ismael being gone, Ibrahim and Mourad became masters of the kingdom, entered Grand Cairo in triumph, and were received joyfully by the people. One appointed himself Sheik El Balad, and the other Emir Hadge. Their first business was to depose the Pacha, who had imprudently been of the contrary faction, and declared them enemies of the Grand Seignior. The emissary in black came to his apartment, turned up the carpet, and the Pacha, immediately, retired to Boulac, where he waited for orders from Constantinople. The new governor came, and they next proceeded to create their Mamluks Beys; at the nomination of whom, I, by means of my Turkish dress, was present. The Sangiaks stood at the bottom

bottom of the council-hall, near the grate of the Pacha, and the people crowded the rest of the apartment. Having given the Kiaya the names of those they meant to appoint, he read them aloud, clothed the new Sangiaks with the caftan, presented them the firman, and proclaimed them Beys. The ceremony ended, they conducted the Sheik El Balad and the Emir Hadge, in pomp, to their palaces. The procession was grand. Ibrahim and Mourad, riding horses bespangled with gold and diamonds, saluted the people, on their right and left, who, making a lane for them, re-echoed their names with shouts, wishing them all manner of prosperity. The two chiefs continually scattered handfuls of medins, piaftres, and sequins, which were as eagerly picked up by the Egyptians. Six hundred Mamluks, magnificently clothed, and mounted on horses richly caparifoned, went before them. The Janiffaries, Affabs, and different bodies of troops, followed in good order. This lasted two hours, and more than four hundred thousand men were spectators. I was surprifed a herd so numerous should voluntarily submit to seven or eight thousand foreigners, whose only employment

ployment is to rob, oppress, and crush them. But the natives of Egypt, gentle, peaceable, and feeble, appear destined for eternal slavery; bending for ages under the yoke of despotism, they submit to every evil without a struggle: were they under a mild government, they would be the happiest people on earth; for not all the miseries they endure can tear them from a country which they passionately love.

Ibrahim and Mourad, having driven Ismael from Grand Cairo, resolved to extinguish the embers of his house. Hassan Bey they particularly feared, who, by his generosity, justice, and valour, had gained the favour of all ranks. Unable to destroy him by art, they employed open force; and directed a six-gun battery against his palace, whither he had retired, distributing troops in the neighbourhood to attack him on every side. Hassan with his Mamluks courageously defended himself, and repelled all their assaults. The noise of artillery spread consternation, war was made in the streets and from the roofs of the houses, buildings were beat down, the tumult of the combatants every where heard, and the cries of the wretched  
who

who were the victims of dissension. Bands of rascals, profiting by the disorder, ran through all quarters of the city, forced doors, entered houses, and put all to fire and sword. The French merchants were terrified, expecting every instant to see the gate of their district forced, their fortunes ruined, and themselves perish amid their wives and children. I was an actor in this tragedy, and with some young people determined to defend the entrance of the street to the last drop of blood, and, at least, to die fighting. Our alarms were not ill founded; about two hundred banditti, with hatchets and arms of all kinds, came to break down the only gate that defended us, but, as it was very strong, and they expected to find resistance, they took another route, and pillaged the neighbouring houses. This horrid scene lasted two days and two nights, during which the noise of cannon and musquetry, and the shrieks of despair, never ceased. We had time to listen, for not one of us could sleep. At last, on the third day, we perceived, from the top of our terraces, Hassan Bey, with two hundred Mamluks, sabre in hand, forcing a passage through his enemies, and

and escaping from Grand Cairo. Flying towards Syria, he met a body of three thousand Arabs in the desert, of the enemy's party, who cut off his retreat. They tried to force their way through these squadrons, and fought desperately. The Mamluks all perished by his side, and he, covered with blood, defended himself for an hour. Being taken, the Arabs brought him back to the capital, and Hassan, at Boulac, entreated them to suffer him to go, for a moment, into the house of a Sheik, one of his friends, and take a last farewell. They granted his request, and dispatched a courier to inform Mourad they brought his enemy prisoner, who immediately sent two hundred soldiers to bring him his head. They surrounded the house, and loudly demanded him; but the Sheik, refusing, declared he would never violate the laws of hospitality, by giving up his friend. They were proposing to use force, when Hassan said, I will not suffer you to expose yourself to the brutality of these madmen; they will murder you, your wife, and children. Let me go. So saying he tore himself from the arms of the Sheik, mounted the terrace, past to another, and

and perceiving the door of the house was guarded only by one soldier, descended softly, opened it, curbed the arm that was lifted to strike him, pulled the soldier off his horse, forced away his sabre, and fled full gallop to Grand Cairo. The soldiers, seeing this, stood fixed in amazement, but, coming to themselves, fired after the fugitive, and pursued him with all speed. Two of them having overtaken him, he cut them down with his sabre, and continued his course. All the streets of Grand Cairo have gates for the public security; several of these he shut, and, carrying the keys with him, stopped his enemies. Being come to the palace of Ibrahim, he entered the court of the haram, and covered his face with his shawl, that he might not be known. The wife of the Sheik El Balad was his kinswoman, and he entreated her to intercede in his behalf; she, accordingly, fell on her knees, and begged her cousin's life; and Ibrahim, relenting, took Hassan under his protection, had his wounds cured, and long resisted Mourad, who demanded his death: but seeing the Emir Hadge prepared for war if his demand was refused, he came to terms with him,

and

and consented the prisoner should be banished to Gedda. Accordingly he was taken to Suez, and delivered to the master of a small vessel, who received orders to transport him to his place of exile. Two of his slaves, the voluntary companions of his ill fortune, knew the captain had a firman, signed by Mourad, which condemned their master to death when he should land, and immediately informed him of it. Hassan feigning ignorance, begged the captain to land him on the coast of Egypt, instead of taking him to Gedda ; but neither his threats nor promises could prevail. This refused, he seized the arms that were on board, in the night, and, assisted by his slaves, killed the captain and three sailors, flung the others overboard, and taking charge of the vessel, steered her to Cossair, and from thence to the Said, bearing with him the sum of sixteen thousand pounds, which he found in the vessel ; since when he has endeavoured to make partizans, and, perhaps, may hereafter return to Cairo victorious according to the desires of the people.

The death of six Beys of Imael's faction, and the flight of the rest, rendered Ibrahim and Mourad absolute in Grand Cairo. All obstacles

obstacles removed, the Emir Hadge made ready, according to custom, to conduct the caravan of Mecca. Pilgrims assembled from all parts, in the plain of Hellai, near the city, where about ten thousand tents were erected, covering a great extent of ground. Those of the officers and chiefs were of painted cloth lined with silk and satin, and adorned with cushions of embroidered stuff in gold and silver. Great numbers of small, coloured, glass lamps were lit round each tent at night, which produced a brilliant and diversified illumination; and the reflected light, gilding the foliage of the orange and date trees, dispersed over the country, had a charming effect. The relations and friends of the pilgrims came to pass this night with them, and, at break of day, the Emir Hadge gave the signal with drums and trumpets. The tents were all struck, camels were loaded with provisions and baggage, and the march began. The van-guard, escorted by a body of horse, well mounted, went first; next followed the camel which carried the carpet destined to cover the caaba, or house of God; his head adorned with a superb plume of feathers, and his body covered with cloth of gold, while priests  
sung



fung round him the hymns of the Koran. About forty thousand pilgrims followed on foot, on horseback, and on camels. Five thousand cavaliers, in different corps, under the orders of the Emir Hadge, flanked the caravan, and a small number of women, borne in litters, went with them. The departure of this caravan was most magnificent. The men, well dressed, seemed strong and healthy; the horses spirited and fiery. When they return their appearance is changed. The animals mean and languid, and the pilgrims pale, meagre, and sun-burnt, look like skeletons. This is an extremely severe journey, which lasts forty days, over deserts where they sometimes travel fifty leagues without finding a drop of water fit to drink. The sun's heat is excessive; the dust, which is raised by the feet of this multitude of men and beasts, obscures the air, fills the eyes and mouth, and takes away the breath. Sometimes the infectious south winds rise in whirlwinds so dreadful that three or four hundred men perish in a day; but this is very advantageous to the Emir Hadge, who inherits the baggage and commercial effects of all who die on the road, and often returns to

Grand Cairo with a third of the wealth which first departed with the caravan.

The caravan that Mourad headed, having passed the far end of the Red Sea, entered the Arabian deserts, where the Arabs assembled, and demanded the usual tribute; but he beheaded their chiefs, and, wanting force to dispute the passage, they retired to their tents breathing vengeance. The caravan came safe to Bedder, where, according to custom, it joined that of Damascus, and, six days after, arrived at Mecca. Mahometans, assembled from all parts of the world, remain a fortnight in this city, performing the duties of religion, and trading to an immense amount. Some of the pilgrims go to fulfil the command which ordains every Mussulman to visit the house of God once in his life; others, attracted by the hope of gain, carry thither the rarest products of their country; rich stuffs, the diamonds of India, the fine pearls of the Persian gulph, the famous balsam of the orientals, the blades of Damascus, Moka coffee, gold dust from Africa, and sequins from Grand Cairo, are all found here in abundance, where, above a hundred thousand traders are assembled;

sembled; it is the richest fair, perhaps, in the world. As the time is short, no calculation can be made of the vast amount of the sale during this fortnight. It were to be wished that some European, who understands Arabic, disguised like a merchant, could be present, and give descriptions, instead of those we have by word of mouth from people who go thither, and which cannot be received with implicit faith, because the Mussulmen do not willingly converse with infidels concerning their religion. Ships, loaded with certain merchandizes of Europe and India, which should proceed to Gedda, then would find certain vent for their cargoes, for which they would be immediately paid in money. The English have made some successful voyages of this kind; which, no doubt, they would have continued, had not political views and disputes, between them and the natives, raised obstacles.

Mourad Bey was not so fortunate returning as he had been when going. Several Arab tribes united to revenge the death of their chiefs: waiting for the caravan between the mountains, which they successfully attacked, and in which disorder and confusion

confusion at first reigned. Among the numbers which fell one over the other, as they fled, many were crushed, and many killed by the continual fire of the enemy. The Emir Hadge, having formed his troops, endeavoured to repel them, marching at the head of the Mamluks; and, notwithstanding the artillery of the Arabs, ascended the mountains, and a bloody battle ensued. The Emir lost many of his men, and was wounded in the thigh and arm by two bullets, which however did not hinder him from vanquishing the Arabs, and obliging them to fly in disorder. They appeared no more, and he came to Grand Cairo, exhausted with fatigue and almost dying. M. Grace, the French physician, was called in, and cured him, but not without suffering many fears, for his life depended on that of the patient. The people of Grand Cairo left the city to meet their relations and friends; and, weeping the loss of brothers, fathers; and, husbands, filled the air with lamentations. Disconsolate mothers rent their cloaths and covered their heads with dust; while others, joyful to meet the persons they loved, blessed Heaven, and were equally loud in their transports.

transports. The various sensations the sight inspired are not to be expressed; excess of grief and intoxicated joy were alternately seen. Each pilgrim, returning to his house, found an apartment prepared, according to his condition of life; the walls painted; the furniture, carpets, sofas, and cushions, renewed; as if any thing ancient were unworthy the man who had made this holy pilgrimage. These incidents, Sir, prove the filial affection of the Egyptians, their piety, and the sublime ideas they have of their religion. Each person coming from Mecca ever after assumes the surname of Hadge (*1*), which he bears as an honourable title. The wealthy, dreading the fatigue of the journey, imagine they obey the command by sending a substitute and paying his expences.

About the end of 1779 I left Egypt, therefore cannot give a circumstantial account of subsequent events; only, by letters from Grand Cairo, I learn that the cholerick Mourad, desirous of being Sheik El Balad, had declared war on his rival; that they had fought, were reconciled; and that, in 1784,

(1) Pilgrim.

quarelling again, they were each at the head of an army, and ready for battle, the success of which I have not heard ; but be the victor who he may, he will endeavour to raise his creatures, and exterminate the Beys of the opposite faction, till treason or defeat have brought him to a similar end.

Judge, Sir, of the state of Egypt, thus abandoned to eight thousand foreign banditti, who devour their rich provinces, and continually subject them to the horrors of war ; but be your ideas what they may on its misery, they are below the truth. Agriculture ruined ; the canals, which every where spread abundance, dry ; arbitrary taxes violently raised ; people of worth plundered and massacred ; robbers in every office ; war, pestilence, and famine ; together with the fatal effects of discord among the chiefs : such, Sir, are the woes under which the Egyptians groan.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    X II.

ON THE AGRICULTURE OF THE  
COUNTRY.

*Agriculture formerly flourished in Egypt ; the great works performed to contain the river, and water the lands, and their decay. Products, seed-time, and harvest, differing according to the situation of the grounds. Their former abundance. How this prodigious fertility might be restored. The Egyptian management of bees, which they take in boats from one end of the kingdom to the other.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**GRICULTURE, Sir, was honourable among the antient Egyptians, which they had rendered most flourishing throughout their empire ; witness their immense labours for distributing the waters over the lands. There are still eighty canals, like rivers, several of which are twenty, thirty, and forty leagues in length, receiving and distributing

buting the inundation over the country. Except six, the others are almost all filled up, and are dry when the Nile is low. The grand lakes of Mœris, Behira, and Mareotis, were vast reservoirs to contain the superabundant waters, and afterwards disperse them among the neighbouring plains. They were raised, over the high lands, by means of chain buckets, the invention of which is due to the Egyptians. One ox can turn them, and water a vast field. These machines gave Archimedes, during his voyage in Egypt, the idea of his ingenious screw, which is still in use. Besides these reservoirs, all the towns, a little distance from the Nile, are surrounded by spacious ponds for the convenience of the inhabitants and agriculture. The remains we find of large mounds were to contain the river: they also stopped the torrents of sand, which incessantly tend to cover the face of Egypt. Aqueducts brought the water to the top of mounts, where there were immense cisterns hewed in the rock, and whence they afterwards ran among deserts, which they transformed into fruitful fields. Near Babain are the ruins of one of these aqueducts, running towards Lybia; it



bears the majestic stamp of the works of the Egyptians, works not less miraculous, and more useful, than the pyramids and colossal figures of the Thebais. They prevented the ravages of high inundations, and supplied the defects of the low ones, thus feeding millions of inhabitants.

Twelve hundred years has this country been subjected to a people who, not farmers themselves, have suffered these great works to perish, and the ignorance of its present government will complete their destruction. The limits of cultivated Egypt yearly decrease, and sterile sands every where accumulate. When the Turks conquered Egypt, in 1517, the lake Mareotis was near the walls of Alexandria, and the canal through which its waters ran to that city was navigable. This lake has disappeared, and the lands it watered, which, according to historians, produced corn, wine, and fruits in abundance, are become deserts, where the melancholy traveller finds neither tree, shrub, nor verdure. The very canal, the work of Alexander, necessary for the subsistence of the city he had built, is almost filled up; it is dry, except when the waters are at the highest point

point of inundation, and soon becomes so again. Forty years since, a part of the mud which the waters had left was removed, and the stream remained three months longer; were it emptied entirely it would recover its antient utility. The Pelusiatic branch, which ran to the eastern side of the Lake of Tanis, or Menzala, is absolutely destroyed, and with it the beautiful province it fertilized. The famous canal begun by Nechos (*m*), and finished by Ptolemy Philadelphus, was cut from this branch to Aggeroud (*n*), the antient Arsinoe, at the extremity of the Red Sea. Fearing that, by opening this communication, this sea, which they supposed eleven feet higher than the Mediterranean, would overflow the country, they formed great locks at its mouth. I think the suspicion was ill founded, since other canals, running from the Nile to the Red Sea, have not produced this inconvenience. Immortal works like these, executed by kings whose happiness and fame were the prosperity of their people, have not withstood the despoli-

(*m*) Strabo and Pliny confirm the fact.

(*n*) The Red Sea has retired two leagues since Ptolemy; Aggeroud is now that distance from Suez.

ing conqueror, and that tyranny which desolates till itself lies buried under the ruins of kingdoms whose foundations it has sapped. The canal of Amrou, the last of the grand labours of Egypt, and which ran from Fostat to Colzoum, extends only four leagues beyond Cairo, and is lost in the lake of the pilgrims. Such, Sir, is the present state of the country, and we may rest assured that more than one-third of the lands formerly cultivated are become deserts, frightful to the traveller.

Population has equally suffered : Ancient Egypt supplied food to eight millions of inhabitants, and to Italy and the neighbouring provinces likewise. At present the estimate is not one half. I do not think, with Herodotus and Pliny, that this kingdom contained twenty thousand cities in the time of Amasis; but the astonishing ruins every where found, and in un-inhabited places, prove they must have been thrice as numerous as they are. You have condescended to read the account I have given of its present government, therefore cannot be astonished at the kingdom's decline. Population is in proportion to the means of subsistence, and with them increases, diminishes, and dies. Now, while eight thousand

land foreigners rob, at pleasure, merchants and husbandmen, the first abandon commerce, the second agriculture, and the people sensibly become less numerous.

The lands all appertain to the chiefs, which they sell to individuals. When the proprietor dies it descends to the son, but he is obliged to purchase his father's inheritance; nor is he certain of obtaining it; the highest bidder, or the man of most credit, becomes proprietor. Who will improve lands which he cannot transmit to his successors? The farmer, wanting only a livelihood, leaves a part of his grounds untilled. Authorized by the treaty of Selim to levy arbitrary taxes, the Cachefs and Sangiaks commit unheard-of oppressions. The wretched labourer often wants food, and sells the instruments of husbandry to pay those impositions; while despotism renders it impossible to cultivate the richest land in the world.

Evils not less fatal result from the vicissitudes of the government. When the Beys make war, the people take part in their quarrels, and mutually destroy each other with fire and sword. I have more than once seen villages burning, their inhabitants massacred

sacred by their neighbours, and the harvest consumed by the flames.

Considerable sums are annually deducted by the chiefs from the tribute sent to Constantinople, for the repairing of public buildings and canals, which they are prevented from doing by their continual dissensions, and their want of money to purchase Mamluks, maintain troops, and increase their faction. This is a mortal blow to agriculture; the district, which owed its fertility and riches to a canal, not receiving sufficient water, becomes barren, and is abandoned. Traversing deserts, and arid countries, for a course of nine hundred leagues, the Nile washes down a prodigious quantity of sand and mud. I have seen channels dug in which, during a year, it had deposited slime three feet deep; imagine, then, how fast it must dam up the useful canals, if men do not continually watch for their preservation. This very fact will explain how immense lakes are become dry, and provinces, formerly fertile, sterile and uninhabited.

What guilt is theirs who thus exhaust the sources of fertility! Wherever the beneficent waters of the Nile come, the earth is loaded with

with its treasures. They plow both in the Delta and the Said, and, the ox having made a shallow furrow, the field is hoed, and levelled like a garden. When sowed it is slightly harrowed, and here ends the labour of the husbandman, till harvest, which is abundant in the extreme, and never fails but with the inundation. The corn and barley, ripe, are reaped, and laid on the floor, and the farmer, seated in a cart, with cutting wheels, and drawn by oxen blind-folded, drives over the straw which it chops. The corn, winnowed, is yellow, large, and of exceeding good quality. The Egyptians eat red, half-baked bread; bad, because, instead of wind and water-mills, they use a hand-mill, and do not sufficiently sift the flour. A French baker made bread as white as snow, and excellently tasted, with this same wheat. Rice, as I have said, requires a little more care; the field must be inundated, well cleared, and watered every day, when it is planted, which is done by the chain buckets. It is cut in five months, and the product is, usually, eighty bushels for one. Beside these grains, Egypt produces abundance of doura, or Indian millet, flax, formerly

merly so famous, hemp, carthamus, or bastard saffron, and multitudes of exquisite melons, and vegetables which the people eat, during the heats.

Seed-time differs according to the province, and the height of the ground. Near Syene, wheat and barley are sown in October, and reaped in January. About Girja, the harvest month is February, and March round Grand Cairo: such is the general progress of the harvest through the Said. There are many exceptions, according as the lands are high or low, more or less distant from the river. They sow and reap all the year in lower Egypt, wherever they can obtain the water of the river. The land is never fallow, and yields three harvests, annually; there the traveller incessantly beholds the charming prospect of flowers, fruits, and corn, and Spring, Summer and Autumn, at once, present their treasures. Descending from the cataracts, at the beginning of January, the wheat is seen almost ripe; farther on it is in ear; and still farther the fields are green. Lucerne is mowed three times between November and March, and is the only hay of Egypt, serving chiefly to fodder the cattle. Horses, asses, mules,

mules, and camels graze the meadows during winter, and they eat chopped straw, barley, and beans, the rest of the year, which kind of feed gives health, strength, and mettle. The Arabs accustom their horses to great abstinence, water them only once a day, and feed them with a little barley and milk.

The Egyptians, who seldom cultivate the olive, buy their oil in Crete and Syria, but, as the love of illuminations has descended to them from their forefathers, they extract oil from various plants: the commonest is the produce of the sesamum; they call it *sirag*, lamp-oil. They also extract it from the seed of the carthamus, from flax, poppies, and lettuce. The oil of the carthamus is eaten by the common people.

I have mentioned, Sir, the Egyptian art of hatching chickens, which is peculiar to themselves. Their manner of raising bees is not less extraordinary, and bespeaks great ingenuity. Upper Egypt, preserving its verdure only four or five months, the flowers and harvests being seen no longer, the people of the lower Egypt profit by this circumstance, assembling on board large boats the bees of different villages. Each proprietor



confides his hives, with his own mark, to the boatman; who, when loaded, gently proceeds up the river, and stops at every place where he finds verdure and flowers. The bees swarm from their cells, at break of day, and collect their nectar, returning, several times, loaded with booty, and, in the evening, re-enter their hives, without ever mistaking their abode. Thus sojourning three months on the Nile, the bees, having extracted the perfumes of the orange flowers of the Said, the essence of the roses of Fayoum, the sweets of the Arabian jafmin, and of every flower, are brought back to their homes, where they find new riches. Thus do the Egyptians procure delicious honey, and plenty of wax. The proprietors pay the boatmen, on their return, according to the number of the hives which they have taken from one end of Egypt to the other.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XIII.

## ON THE CLIMATE OF EGYPT.

*Heat excessive in the upper, and moderate in the lower, Egypt. The people subject to few diseases. Their manner of curing fevers, and preserving health. Pernicious south wind during a part of winter. Leprosy unknown, and the plague not native, in Egypt. Europeans secured from it by secluding themselves.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE spoken of Egypt, and its productions, Sir, but you have reason to entertain doubts concerning the salubrity of the climate. The Nile's inundation, and stagnant waters in various places, may lead you to suppose the country unhealthy, and its inhabitants subject to many diseases: some length of experience and information, collected on the spot, may display facts that may calm your fears, and fix your opinion.

Egypt, beginning at the torrid, extends nine degrees into the temperate zone, though certainly the heats of the Thebais surpass what are felt in many countries directly under the equator. Reaumur's thermometer, when the burning breath of the south is felt, sometimes rises to thirty-eight degrees above the freezing point, and, often, to thirty-six. This phenomenon must be attributed to the aridity of the sandy plains, which surround upper Egypt, and the reverberated sun-beams from the mountains, by which it is wholly inclosed. Were heat the principle of diseases, the Said would not be habitable, but it only seems to occasion a burning fever, to which the inhabitants are subject, and which they cure by regimen, drinking much water, and bathing in the river: in other respects they are strong and healthy. Old men are numerous, and many ride on horseback at eighty. The food they eat, in the hot season, much contributes to the preservation of their health; it is chiefly vegetables, pulse and milk. They bathe frequently, eat little, seldom drink fermented liquors, and mix much lemon juice in their food. This abstinence preserves vigour to a very advanced age.

Soon

Soon after the inundation, the fields are covered with corn: the waters, exhaled by the sun during the day, and condensed by the coolness of night, fall in plentiful dews. The north wind, in summer, continually blows, and, finding no obstacle through all Egypt, where the mountains are not high, drives the vapours of the marshes and lakes towards Abyssinia, and incessantly changes the atmosphere. Perhaps the balsamic emanations of orange flowers, roses, the Arabian jasmine, and odorous plants, contribute to the salubrity of the air. The waters of the Nile, also, lighter, softer, and more agreeable to the taste than any I know, greatly influence the health of the inhabitants. All antiquity acknowledges their excellence (*a*), and the people, certainly, drink them with a kind of avidity, without ever being injured

(*a*) Ptolemy Philadelphus marrying his daughter Berenice to Antiochus King of Syria, sent her water from the Nile, which, alone, she could drink. *Athenæus*.—The Kings of Persia send for the waters of the Nile and Sal ammoniac. *Dino History of Persia*.

The Egyptians are the only people who preserve the water of the Nile in sealed vases, and drink it, when it is old, with the same pleasure we do old wine. *Aristides Rhetor*.

by the quantity. Being lightly impregnated with nitre, they are only a gentle aperient to those who take them to excess. I will not say, with many writers, they make the women prolific, and give strength and plumpness to the men; the faithful historian ought to stop where the marvellous begins, and relate only what he can warrant.

In Lower Egypt, the neighbourhood of the sea, the large lakes, and the abundance of the waters, moderate the sun's heat, and preserve a delightful temperature. Strabo and Diodorus Siculus, who long lived here, did not think the country unhealthy.

They have praised its fruitful soil, its grateful productions, its stately monuments, and its great population; without mentioning the dreadful maladies of which the moderns have made it the seat. Herodotus positively says, "The Egyptians are the most  
" healthy people on earth, which advantage  
" they owe to the salubrity of the air, and  
" temperature of the climate, which seldom  
" varies; for most of the diseases of men  
" ought to be attributed to the rapid vicissitude of the seasons." To some moderns, who have never seen this fine kingdom, and,  
especially,

especially, to M. Paw, it was reserved to teach us a contrary doctrine. He pretends that, at present, “ this country is become, “ by the negligence of the Turks and Arabs, “ the cradle of the pestilence ; that another “ epidemical disease, equally dreadful, ap- “ pears here, occasionally, brought to Cairo “ by the caravans of Nubia ; that the cul- “ ture of rice engenders numerous maladies, “ that the want of rain and thunder occa- “ sions the air of the Thebais to acquire a “ violence that ferments the humours of “ the human body, &c. (b)” These assertions have an air of probability which might impose on people who have not lived in Egypt; but M. Paw has ventured opinions in his closet, without the guidance of experience : had he lived here, facts would have demonstrated the contrary.

In vallies, inclosed by high mountains, where the atmosphere is not continually renewed by a current of air, the culture of rice is unwholesome, and the husbandman, often, pays with his life the rich harvest the earth yields. But not so near Damietta and Rosetta. The plains are nearly on a level

(b) *Recherches sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois.*

with the sea; neither hill nor height impede the refreshing breath of the north, which drives the clouds and exhalations of the flooded fields southward, continually purifies the atmosphere, and preserves the health of the people. Whether this, or any other, be the cause, of which I am ignorant, certainly, the husbandmen who cultivate the rice are not more subject to diseases than those of the Thebais, who do not. I passed the whole year amidst rice fields, which I every day went to see watered, without finding the least inconvenience. An old surgeon, a native of Nice, and who, thirty years, had practised at Damietta, has repeatedly confirmed what I have advanced on the healthiness of the country. The greatest torment of the inhabitants are the gnats and musquitos, which, rising by millions out of the marshes, swarm in the air and the houses. The handkerchief must be held in the hand all day. It is the first thing a visitor receives, and, at night, it is necessary to sleep under musquiteros.

Diseases of the eyes are the commonest in Egypt, where the blind are numerous. This affliction ought not, wholly, to be attributed

to the reflected beams of a burning sun; for the Arabs, who live amidst sands, generally, have good eyes and a piercing sight: nor must we think, with Hasselquist (*c*), whose stay was short in this country, that the disease was occasioned by the exhalations of the stagnant waters; for the French merchants, whose houses are on the banks of the canal of Grand Cairo, that for six months in the year contains water the smell of which is insupportable, would be all blind, and for these fifty years not one has lost his sight (*d*). The origin of this disease, no doubt, is the Egyptian custom of sleeping in the open air, on the terraces of their houses, or near their huts, during summer. The abundance of nitre in the atmosphere, and of night dews, attack the delicate organ of sight, and render them blind of one eye, or both. Eight thousand of these unfortunate people are decently maintained in the great mosque of Grand Cairo.

The small pox and ruptures are also very common in Egypt, without committing great

(*c*) Voyage d'Egypte.

(*d*) One, only, of these merchants became blind; but he lived in the city, not near the canal: wherefore this proves nothing in favour of Hasselquist's opinion.



ravages. As to pulmonary diseases, which, in cold countries, carry off so many, in the prime of youth, they are unknown in this happy climate. Those, I am persuaded, who are attacked by these cruel diseases, would recover health in a country where the air, oily, warm, moist, and replenished with the perfume of plants, and the oil of the earth, seems most favourable to the lungs (*e*).

I must own, however, there is an unhealthy season in Egypt. From February till the end of May, the south winds blow, at intervals, and load the atmosphere with a subtle dust, which makes breathing difficult, and drive before them pernicious exhalations. Sometimes the heat becomes insupportable, and the thermometer suddenly rises twelve degrees. The inhabitants call this

(*e*) M. Paw pretends the Egyptians have, in all ages, been leprous; but Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, who knew the country well, do not mention the disease; a proof it was unknown there, in their time. In the Archipelago islands I have seen leprous people, sequestered from society, as they were among the Jews, inhabiting huts, near the road side, and asking alms: but in Egypt I never, in all my travels, met one of these wretches.

season.

season *Khamfin*, fifty, because these winds are most felt between Easter and Whitsuntide, during which they eat rice, vegetables, fresh fish, and fruits; bathing frequently, and using plenty of perfumes; and lemon juice, with which regimen they prevent the dangerous effects of the *Khamfin*.

It must not be supposed that this wind, which, in a few hours, corrupts meat and animal substances, blows fifty days; Egypt would become a desert. It seldom blows three days together, and, sometimes, is only an impetuous whirlwind which rapidly passes, and injures only the traveller overtaken in the deserts. When at Alexandria, in the month of May, a tempest of this kind suddenly arose, driving before it torrents of burning sand: the serenity of the sky disappeared, a thick veil obscured the Heavens, and the sun became blood-coloured. The dust penetrated even the chambers, and burnt the face and eyes. In four hours the tempest ceased, and the clearness of day appeared. Some wretches, in the deserts, were suffocated, and several I saw brought dead, some of whom, bathed in cold water, were restored to life. The inhabitants of Grand Cairo,

Cairo, being more inland, suffer more; and a French merchant, who was fat, died, suffocated by the heat. Similar phænomena have buried caravans and armies.

Several modern authors, with M. Paw at their head, have said the pestilence is native in Egypt. Were this true it would greatly diminish the advantages of the country, for neither fertility nor riches can preponderate against an evil so dreadful. I have collected information from the Egyptians, and foreign physicians who have lived there twenty or thirty years, which all tends to prove the contrary. They have assured me this epidemic disease was brought thither by the Turks, though it has committed great ravages. I myself saw the caravelles of the Grand Seigneur, in 1778, unlade, according to custom, the silks of Syria at Damietta. The plague is almost always on board, and they landed, without opposition, their merchandize, and their people who had the plague. It was the month of August, and, as the disease was then over in Egypt, it did not communicate that season. The vessels set sail, and went to poison other places. The summer following, the ships of Constantinople, alike infected, came to  
the

the port of Alexandria, where they landed their diseased, without injury to the inhabitants. Since this time, the ships of Smyrna have brought the contagion here, at the beginning of winter; it has spread over the country, and a part of the Egyptians have perished.

The following is an observation of ages. During the months of June, July, and August, if infected merchandize be brought into Egypt, the pestilence expires of itself, and the people have no fears; and if brought at other seasons, and communicated, it then ceases. A proof that it is not native in Egypt is that, except in time of great famine, it never breaks out in Grand Cairo, nor the inland towns, but always begins at sea ports, on the arrival of Turkish vessels, and travels to the capital, whence it proceeds as far as Syene. Having come to a period in Grand Cairo, and being again introduced, by the people of Upper Egypt, it renews, with greater fury, and, sometimes, sweeps off two or three hundred thousand souls; but always stops in the month of June, or those who catch it then are always cured. Should these cessations be attributed to

to the great heats, the salubrious north winds of summer, or the heavy dews? Perhaps these causes all contribute (*f*).

We ought not to pass over another striking remark, which is, that the excess of heat and cold are equally destructive of this dreadful contagion; winter kills it at Constantinople, and summer in Egypt; it seldom reaches the polar circle, and never passes the tropic. The caravans of Grand Cairo, Damascus, and Ispahan, which are sometimes infected,

(*f*) I cannot forbear citing an incident, Sir, which was told me by a captain, deserving credit, because it may afford information to those physicians who seek an antidote against this destructive evil. "I left Constantinople, " where the plague was raging, and my sailors had contracted the disease. Two suddenly died, and, by assisting them, I was infected. I felt excessive heat, which " made my blood boil: the disease seized my head, and I " perceived I had only a few moments to live. The little remaining reason I had taught me to attempt an " experiment. I laid myself, quite naked, all night on " the deck; the heavy dews that fell penetrated to my " very bones, and, in a few hours, I could breathe freer, " and my head was better; my agitated blood became " calm, and, bathing, the morning after, in the sea, I " was perfectly cured." I know not, Sir, whether the remedy be infallible, but this I am certain, that no pestiferous matter, passed through water, will communicate the infection.

never

never propagate it at Mecca ; and Yemen is safe from the plague.

History seldom mentions its appearance at Lacedemon, Athens, and Byzantium. When it spread in Greece, the people expelled it by keeping large fires in the open places, cleaning the canals, levelling hills which stopped the vapours, and preventing communication. Neither the air, sun, nor water of these fine countries are changed : the same salubrity would still exist were they inhabited by nations whose government watched over the well-being of the citizens, and the public safety. Smyrna and Constantinople are now the residence of this dreadful affliction, which must be attributed to the little value in which the Turkish government holds the lives of men, and their absurd ideas on predestination. Of what consequence is it to the despot though half his people perish, if he, shut up in his seraglio, be secure ; or to the Mahometan, while the plague sweeps thousands from his side ; since he must live till his hour is come, to endeavour to retard it would be vain ?

When the infection pervades the European and Greek habitations, they purify them by  
fumigating,

fumigating, leaving the windows open, that the air may freely circulate, and burning all the effects of the pestiferous. Not so the Armenians and Turks; they neither burn nor purify. The Jews purchase, at a low price, the goods and wares which remain when the greatest part of the family are deceased, and store them up; which, when the plague is over, they sell at a dear rate to those who will purchase, and thus propagate the pestilential poison (*g*); again it kindles, and presently causes new destruction. Thus this opprobrious nation, preferring gold to life, sell the plague to Mussulmen, who purchase it without fear, and sleep with it till the time that, revived itself, it hurries them to the grave.

The European stands aghast with fear at the calamities it produces in Grand Cairo. According to the commissioners of the customs, this city contains from eight to nine hundred thousand inhabitants. They are so crowded that two hundred citizens here, occupy less space than thirty at Paris. The

(*g*) The last plague at Moscow carried off two hundred thousand people, and was brought by infected merchandise from the storehouses of the Jews.

streets are very narrow, and always full of people, who crowd and jostle each other; and the passenger is, sometimes, obliged to wait several minutes before he can make his way. One person with the plague will communicate it to a hundred; its progress is rapid, and spreads with the violence of a conflagration, while the wind augments its flames. The Mahometans die in their houses, public squares, and streets, without one of them endeavouring to save himself. *Ellmoukaddar*, say they; It is fate; yet have they the example of the Europeans, who, alone, escape the general disaster.

When the disease breaks out, the French shut up their district, and intercept all communication with the city. Arab servants, who live without, every day bring them such provisions as they want, and, except bread, which does not communicate the infection, they throw what they bring through an aperture, cut in each door, into a tub of water, by which it is purified, and used without fear. These precautions give health and life to the French merchants, while surrounded with all the horrors of death. Burials, funeral processions, and tears, are in every street;



street; for when the Egyptians bury their relations and friends, there are hired mourners who make the air resound with their lamentations (*b*), and desolate mothers, who, groaning, cover their faces with dust, rend their cloaths, attending to the grave the child they have nurtured, and whom they soon after follow; for the Eastern people, more pious than we are, never forsake their infected relations, but assist them to the last moment, though almost certain their affection will be fatal. These cries of despair, and funeral pomp, spread a general consternation, and the French tremble in their asylums. Who, indeed, could see unmoved, or unterrified, humanity suffering under a visitation so fearful?

All do not die who are attacked; but, I have been assured, the plague sometimes car-

(*b*) It was the same in the time of Herodotus. "When a person of family dies, all the women relations bewail their faces, and run through the city with their hair dishevelled, their bosoms bare, and their garments tucked up; beating their breasts, and uttering loud cries." Euterpe.

The islanders of the South Sea carry filial piety and maternal tenderness farther; deeply wounding themselves in the face, at the death of their relations, and testifying their grief by streams of blood.

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ries off three hundred thousand people from Grand Cairo, Could you suppose, Sir, the example of the French, who, when the contagion is past, all leave their houses safe, and in health, would not induce the Turks to use like precautions? Could you imagine that, throughout the whole Ottoman empire, quarantine is not performed at one single port; or merits a nation like this to inhabit the country of the ancient Greeks, and Egyptians? The Turks have destroyed arts, commerce, and liberty; and suffer, for want of laws, their wretched slaves to perish. They perpetuate the most dreadful scourge known to humanity, and change famous islands, flourishing cities, and kingdoms, into deserts.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XIV.

ON THE VARIOUS INHABITANTS OF  
EGYPT.

*The Copts, the descendants of the Egyptians, have lost the genius and science of their ancestors. The Arabs are the next oldest inhabitants of the country, where they have twice reigned. Those who, subject to the Beys, cultivate their lands, have lost the good faith natural to their nation. Those who live under their Sheiks have preserved their honesty and virtue. The Bedouins, inhabiting the deserts, at open war with all caravans; but generous, hospitable, and faithful to their oaths. Mechanic arts exercised by the Christians of Syria, Greeks and Jews; and few real Turks in Egypt.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** HAVE only slightly noticed the various nations who inhabit Egypt; and it is proper, Sir, to describe their characters, customs, and

and arts, more circumstantially. The Arabs, particularly, who surround, and, in part, occupy the kingdom, deserve our attention. What I have to offer will explain how four millions of men are held in subjection by eight thousand foreigners; and how a wandering nation has preserved its liberty and laws encircled by formidable powers.

The real native Egyptians are the Copts, called so, according to some authors, from Cophthos, once a famous city in the Thebais; and to others from *Cobtos*, cut, because they have always preserved the use of circumcision. These, only, are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians; and who, more than two thousand years, subjected by foreign powers, have lost the genius and science of their forefathers, though they have preserved their customs, and the antient vulgar tongue. The transmitted knowledge from father to son of all arable lands, their value, and extent, occasions them to be chosen clerks to the Beys, and stewards to the governors; and that they may conceal their accounts from these Lords, most of them are written in Coptic. They, notwithstanding, do not perfectly understand the language; but, as their

missals, pentateuch, and various other works they possess, have an Arabic translation, their antient language is not lost; in some future time it, perhaps, may supply the learned with means of dispelling the obscurity of the first ages, during the reign of the Pharaohs, and remove the veil from the mysterious hieroglyphics.

The Copts embraced Christianity at its birth; and Amrou, having conquered Egypt, permitted them the free exercise of the Christian religion: since when they have ever had churches, priests, bishops, and a patriarch, who has fixed his residence at Grand Cairo ever since it became the capital. Adhering to the rites of Monothelism, their ignorance will not suffer them to discover the dereliction into which they are fallen, and in which they are so confirmed, by obstinacy and a sectary spirit, that nothing could oblige them to change their religion. Numerous superstitious practices, received from their ancestors, are mingled in their worship; but they are mild, humane, and hospitable. Paternal tenderness and filial love constitute their domestic happiness, where every tie of blood is cherished and honored. Inland trade,  
the

the art of hatching eggs, and raising bees, are almost the whole of their knowledge. They often enrich themselves by the administrations entrusted to them; but do not tranquilly enjoy the fruits of their labours. The Bey who beholds them opulent, often, strips them of their riches, without mercy; and happy are they can't they purchase life with the loss of fortune. Such oppressions do not excite revolt; their want of energy keeps them enchained in poverty and subjection, which they support without murmuring.

After the Copts, the Arabs are the most antient people of Egypt, where they twice have reigned. Their first dominion was in the remote ages of antiquity, and, according to some authors, before the time of Joïeph. The second begun in the seventh century and ended in the twelfth. Two-thirds of the present inhabitants are Arabs, the manners of whom differ according to their mode of life. Those who, become husbandmen, are governed by their foreign masters, present a striking example to philosophers of the influence of laws over men. Beneath a tyrannic government, they have lost that good faith

and uprightness which characterize their nation. They take part in their master's quarrels. Villages arm against villages, and towns against towns; and, during the revolutions which are continually reviving in Grand Cairo, the country presents a frightful scene of carnage and horror; flames devouring the harvest, and the blood of the labourer shed on the earth he had tilled. Hatred being eternal among these people, and the mother imparting, with her milk, the desire of vengeance to her son, men are born here for mutual destruction. Those degenerate Arabs called *Fellah*, render the navigation of the Nile exceedingly dangerous, attack boats in the dark, massacre passengers, seize their effects, and commit every kind of outrage.

Another division of the Arabs, who may be called husbandmen, are governed by their Sheiks, who possess various principalities in the Thebais. This word, signifying elder, is the proud sign of their power. Now, as heretofore, they are the judge, the pontif, and the sovereign of their people; yet governing more like fathers of families than kings. These venerable patriarchs usually take their meals at the doors of their houses,

or tents, inviting all comers: rising from table, they cry aloud, *Whoever is hungry let him, in the name of God, come and eat*, which is not a barren form; any man, whoever he may be, has a right to sit down and feed on what he finds. Suffer me to cite the passage where Abraham receives the angels, that you may compare the manners of this people with those of ancient times (*i*).

“ And the Lord appeared unto Abraham,  
 “ in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the  
 “ tent door in the heat of the day.

“ And he lifted up his eyes and looked,  
 “ and lo, three men stood by him: and when  
 “ he saw them, he ran to meet them from  
 “ the tent-door, and bowed himself toward  
 “ the ground,

“ And said, My Lord, if now I have  
 “ found favour in thy sight, pass not away,  
 “ I pray thee, from thy servant:

“ Let a little water, I pray you, be fetch-  
 “ ed, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves  
 “ under the tree:

“ And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and  
 “ comfort ye your hearts; after that you

(*i*) Genesis, chap. XVIII. ver. 1—8.



“ shall pass on : for therefore are ye come to  
“ your servant. And they said, So do as  
“ thou hast said.

“ And Abraham hastened into the tent  
“ unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly  
“ three measures of fine meal, knead it, and  
“ make cakes upon the hearth.

“ And Abraham ran unto the herd, and  
“ fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it  
“ unto a young man ; and he hasted to dress  
“ it.

“ And he took butter and milk, and the  
“ calf which he had dressed, and set it be-  
“ fore them ; and he stood by them under  
“ the tree, and they did eat.”

The Arabs give the like reception to strangers and travellers who approach their tents ; servants wash their feet, women knead unleavened bread, bake it on the hearth, and serve them roast mutton, milk, honey, and the best provisions they possess. The little taxes which the Sheiks levy over their domains do not oppress their subjects, who love them. The Arab comes with his complaints to their tribunal, and, not being complicated, the light of nature, reason, and the simple and clear laws of the Koran are sufficient, immediately,

immediately, to terminate differences. Their judgments are, mostly, dictated by equity, and, under this paternal government, man, enjoying all his liberty, is attached to his prince by ties, only, of respect and gratitude, to whom he speaks freely, and praises or blames as he finds occasion. I will cite a passage which shews how far the Arabs carry this frankness.

Elmanfor, the second of the Abasside Caliphs, founded Bagdad, in 769, became famous by his victories and power, and the capacity with which he governed immense territories. His affability was extreme, yet all these good qualities were tarnished by unbounded avarice. An Arab, one day, approaching him, said, "Health to the father of Jafar"—"Health be to thee," answered Elmanfor—"Thou art of the generous race of Hascem; grant me a small part of the immense treasure thou possessest."—"Not to me, but to the Apostle of God, shouldest thou address thy prayers."—"My garments are torn, and age has robbed me of strength."—"Let us change, take mine."—Elmanfor, immediately stripping, gave him his clothes; but

but the Arab, perceiving they were worn out and patched, said, Art thou not acquainted, Caliph, with the sentence of the son of Harima? "The rich miser, who cloathes himself in rags, is nevertheless subject to death."

Thus freely do the Arabs speak to their Chiefs. Devoted to their interest, the least token from them will make them arm to repel the oppression of the Turks, who never could subject them; for, if victorious, they remain in their territories; if vanquished, they abandon them, taking their wives, children, and flocks, amid the deserts. Profiting, afterwards, by times of trouble and disorder, they return armed, attack their foes, and regain their possessions. Were these Chiefs to unite their forces, and form a league against the Turks, they would easily drive them from Egypt, and become its masters. But the policy of the Beys prevents such a union, by sowing dissention, aiding the feeble, confirming the authority, only, of those whom they think favour their own views; and, especially, by fraud or poison, taking off the Emirs whose power, talents, or ambition they dread.

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The Arabs are the best of people ; ignorant of the vices of polished nations, incapable of disguise, they know neither falsehood nor knavery. Haughty and generous, they repel insult by arms, and never employ treachery ; hospitality is sacred among them, their houses and tents are open to travellers of all religions, and their guests are treated with as much respect and affection as their own kindred ; and so far is this honourable virtue carried, that, should the enemy, whose death they have determined, submit to come and drink coffee with them, he has nothing more to fear. This, only, can make them forget resentment, and renounce the pleasure of revenge. You will form an idea of their honesty by the following fact, of which I was a witness. An Arab Sheik had long, annually, come to the district of the French, where he took up goods on credit, of a merchant, still coming the following year, at the same time, bringing the money, and taking fresh merchandize. Sicknefs, one year, prevented him from coming, himself, at the appointed time ; but he sent his son, with the money, and continued a trade equally honourable to both nations.

A third

A third species of Arabs is comprised under the general denomination of Bedaoui, inhabitants of the deserts, a pastoral people who reside in the burning solitudes which stretch to the east and west of Egypt. They are divided into tribes, meddle not with agriculture, and feed on barley, dates, and the flesh and milk of their herds, which they drive into the vallies, where they find water and pasturage. Having exhausted one place, they load their camels with their tents, wives, and children, mount their horses, and the whole tribe seeks a new abode. Masters of the deserts, they are the enemies of all caravans, attack them wherever they can find them, and force them either to fight or pay tribute. If the resistance be too powerful, they retreat without fear of pursuit; if they conquer, they pillage every body, divide the spoil, but never kill any one, unless to revenge the death of their companions. A traveller putting himself under their protection has nothing to fear, either for life or wealth, for their word is sacred; and neither have I read in history, nor learnt in these countries, where they inhabit, that any Arab ever violated sworn faith.

faith. This is a characteristic mark which distinguishes them from all other nations. Their love of plunder never makes them forget the rights of hospitality, which are not less honoured by them than by the husbandmen Arabs. After the miseries M. de St. Germain underwent, crossing Suez, he came, expiring, to the tent of a Bedouin, to whose generous cares he owed his life, and who conducted him to Grand Cairo, as soon as his health was recovered. M. Pagès fled over the sands of Arabia deserta, with seven Arabs ; he had lost his water and provisions, and, falling from his camel, was in danger of being sacrificed to the resentment of an insulted tribe. One of his companions alighted, and, at the risk of his life, took him up behind him, till they came into a place of safety. The whole provision of the Arabs, during the journey, was a barley cake a day, and not a large one. This they divided into eight portions, and the one they gave the stranger was always twice as much as their own.

An excessive love of liberty occasions them to prefer the dreary wilderness, where they live independent, to the rich plains of Egypt, where

where they must live slaves. Government has several times offered them lands, which they have constantly refused, because they must have submitted to tyrants; and this independent spirit, so well pourtrayed in the Scriptures, they have inviolably preserved from the time of Ishmael, their father. Herodotus, one of the most ancient historians, speaks of them thus:—" Cambyfes (*k*), desirous to lead his armies into Egypt, sent ambassadors to the King of the Arabs, to require a safe passage through his country, which was granted, and the two nations promised mutual faith. The Arabs are, of all people, the most faithful to their oaths. The manner in which they make their treaties is thus: one of them, standing between the contracting parties, lacerates the palm of their hands, with a sharp stone; then, collecting wool from their garments, he stains it with blood, and rubs seven stones with it, which are placed between them, invoking Bacchus and Urania. If the person soliciting alliance be a foreigner, he afterwards be-

(*k*) Herodotus Thalia.

" comes

“ comes their sacred guest ; if a country-  
 “ man, they regard him as one of the tribe  
 “ with whom he has formed this compact,  
 “ which is ever after inviolable.” The  
 Arabs no longer observe the same ceremonies ; they now are satisfied, when they treat, with mutually shaking hands, and swearing, by their head, they will faithfully observe the conditions stipulated, and they never are perjured.

Diodorus Siculus, many ages after Herodotus, paints them in the same colours. I will cite a passage, because it will shew how little these people have changed, and because, perhaps, it is the sole portrait history affords which, after a lapse of eighteen hundred years, resembles the same nation.

“ The wandering Arabs (*l*) inhabit the  
 “ open plains, having no houses ; they  
 “ themselves call their country a wilderness,  
 “ and chuse not their abode in places where  
 “ rivers and springs abound, lest these allu-  
 “ rements might bring enemies into their  
 “ neighbourhood. Their law, or their cus-  
 “ tom, forbids them to sow corn, plant

(*l*) Diodorus Siculus, lib. 19.



“ fruit trees, drink wine, or inhabit houses ;  
“ which whoever should violate would in-  
“ fallibly be punished with death, being per-  
“ suaded that the man, who would subject  
“ himself to such wants, would presently  
“ subject himself to masters, for their pre-  
“ servation. Some have herds of camels,  
“ others flocks of sheep, and the latter are  
“ the most wealthy ; exclusive of the gains  
“ of their flocks, they come to sea ports and  
“ sell incense, myrrh, and other precious  
“ aromatics, which they obtain from the  
“ inhabitants of Arabia Felix. Jealous of  
“ their liberty to excess, they fly, at the  
“ approach of an army, to the recesses of  
“ their deserts, the extent of which serves  
“ them as a rampart. Finding no water,  
“ an enemy dares not pursue ; while the  
“ Arabs are supplied by reservoirs hidden  
“ under ground, and known only to them-  
“ selves. The soil being a soft clay, they  
“ find means to dig vast, deep, and square,  
“ cisterns ; each side a hundred feet (or  
“ plethron) which, filling with rain water,  
“ they close up the entrance, and, render-  
“ ing the ground uniform, leave only some  
“ slight mark, imperceptible to any but  
“ themselves.

“ themselves. They accustom their cattle  
 “ to drink only once in three days (*m*),  
 “ that, when obliged to fly across parched  
 “ sands, they may support thirst. They  
 “ themselves live on flesh, milk, and the  
 “ commonest fruits. The pepper-tree grows  
 “ in their country (*n*), and they have much  
 “ wild honey, which they drink with wa-  
 “ ter. There are other Arabs, who culti-  
 “ vate the earth, and, like the Syrians, pay  
 “ tribute; differing from them in nothing,  
 “ except that they do not inhabit houses.  
 “ Such, nearly, are the manners of these  
 “ people.” This sketch, by an enlightened  
 historian, is remarkably exact, and exhibits  
 the Bedouins of the present times. Permit  
 me to quote a passage, from the same au-  
 thor, which is finely descriptive of their  
 honesty, and the knavery of the Greeks.  
 “ The Nabathean Arabs forsook the deserts,  
 “ to go to a famous fair; leaving, at their

(*m*) The Abyssinians, who return by Girja into their own country, having a desert of seven days journey to cross, accustom their camels to live thus long without water.

(*n*) I believe Diodorus is mistaken, and that pepper is brought to Arabia by the ships coming from India.

“ departure, their wealth, children, and  
“ wives, in the caverns of a mountain;  
“ which, being two days journey from any  
“ habitable place, and defended by its situ-  
“ ation, and burning solitudes, seemed safe  
“ from enemies. The Greeks, however,  
“ thirsting for gold, took this opportunity  
“ to attack them. Athenæus, a comman-  
“ der under Antigonus, left Idumea with a  
“ body of light armed troops, marched  
“ 2200 stadia in three days and three nights,  
“ arrived at the asylum of the Nabatheans,  
“ forced it, killed a part of the unfortunate  
“ people they found, took a great number  
“ of prisoners, and carried off the incense,  
“ myrrh, and five hundred talents of silver,  
“ which had been there deposited. Heat  
“ and fatigue obliged them to halt 200 stadia  
“ from the rock, where a hasty camp was  
“ formed. The soldiers, overwhelmed with  
“ lassitude, and thinking they had nothing  
“ to fear, yielded to the sweets of sleep.  
“ The Nabatheans, however, hearing of  
“ this invasion, immediately departed, and  
“ arrived at their abode. The complaints  
“ of the wounded, and the blood of the  
“ aged, inspired horror; they flew to ven-  
“ geance,

“ geance, and soon came up with the ene-  
“ my. Some prisoners, profiting by the  
“ negligence of the Greeks, got free, and  
“ informed them of the state they were in.  
“ The Arabs, hearing this, attacked the  
“ camp on all sides, which, favoured by  
“ darkness, they penetrated, massacred the  
“ sleeping soldiers, and transfixed those with  
“ their darts who rose to take arms. The  
“ slaughter was general, only fifty horse  
“ escaping, most of them wounded. The  
“ Nabatheans, having recovered their pri-  
“ soners and wealth, brought them back,  
“ and, after giving the Greeks this lesson,  
“ wrote to Antigonus, to complain of Athe-  
“ næus, and justify their conduct. The  
“ monarch disclaimed the act of his general,  
“ said it was undertaken without his know-  
“ ledge, and that they were justified in their  
“ defence; using this dissimulation to ren-  
“ der them unsuspecting, and hoping to find  
“ a more favourable opportunity to revenge  
“ his army’s defeat. But the Arabs,  
“ placing little faith in the Greeks, kept  
“ on their guard, and set centinels on the  
“ heights, to give intelligence of the ap-  
“ proach of the enemy, and they soon pro-

“fited by their prudence. Some months  
“having elapsed, Antigonus sent eight thou-  
“sand chosen men against them, command-  
“ed by his son Demetrius, who marched  
“his army through unfrequented places,  
“that he might take them by surprize.  
“Warned by their spies, the Nabatheans  
“sent their flocks into the depths of the  
“deserts, and fortified themselves on the  
“mountain, which Demetrius found guard-  
“ed by their brave youth, by whom he  
“was vigorously opposed. After ineffec-  
“tually attacking them with his whole  
“force, he retreated, in seeming flight, but  
“returned to the assault on the morrow,  
“with no greater success. An Arab, then,  
“with a loud voice, thus called: Where-  
“fore, O king Demetrius, wouldest thou  
“war with a people who inhabit a wilder-  
“ness, without water, wine, or food, and  
“containing none of all the things which  
“excite, among you, avarice and strife?  
“The dread of slavery brought us to the  
“desert, deprived of all the allurements men  
“with such avidity seek, and has reduced  
“us to a wild and solitary life, which makes  
“us incapable of doing you injury. We  
“therefore

“ therefore intreat you, and the king your  
“ father, to molest us not: nay, we will  
“ send you presents, to induce you to retire,  
“ and account the Nabatheans among your  
“ faithful friends; and, should not these  
“ motives prevail, necessity soon will force  
“ you to forsake a wilderness, where you  
“ will want water and food. We never  
“ will subject ourselves to other manners.  
“ What, then, do you hope from this ex-  
“ pedition? The most you can obtain will  
“ be some few slaves, whom force, only,  
“ can hold in servitude, and who never will  
“ bend to your modes and customs.—Struck  
“ by this discourse, Demetrius made peace  
“ with the Nabatheans.”

Such, Sir, were the Arabs, before and after Alexander, and such are they still. The love of independance still lives in their hearts, and their aversion to all foreign subjection still makes them prefer the dreary desert to the most captivating plains. Liberty has so many charms that, to obtain it, they firmly support hunger, thirst, and the scorching sun. Sometimes humbled, but never enslaved, they have braved all the powers of the earth, and shook off the chains in

which other nations have alternately been bound. The Romans, masters of the world, lost the armies they sent to conquer their country. The Egyptians, Persians, and Ottomans, never could subdue them. Thus, this proud people is the sole nation which has preserved that haughtiness of character, generosity, and inviolable fidelity, which so highly honour humanity. Deceit and perjury they know not. Ignorant of, though not despising, science, sound reason, uprightness, and elevation of soul, distinguish them from all the orientals. In the presence of strangers, as in the presence of their princes, they preserve the dignity of man, which they never debase by vile flattery. Serious, but not surly, acute, but not ostentatious, frank, yet not rude, they are acquainted with the charms of a conversation sometimes chearful and sometimes wise. Their friendship is sacred, and their friend is their brother. Nor are they strangers to delicacy of sentiment: their poems are pictures of that ardent passion they respire, under their fiery sky; and, sometimes, of that gallantry which seems to belong to people more polished. These, Sir, are the Arabs which  
the

the genius of a single man united, to the destruction of thrones, the conquering of kingdoms, and the imposing of laws on two thirds of the earth. Their conquests are lost, but their character, religion, and manners, preserved. Should another Mahomet arise, in the east, capable of collecting their scattered tribes, he again might subject Asia, and Africa, to their dominion. The philosopher, who would study man in his primitive state, should reside among the Arabs, and not with people whose mind, heart, and affections, have been debased by despotism, and servitude.

Except the Copts and Arabs, the Mograbians, or western Mahometans, are the most numerous inhabitants of Egypt: they devote themselves some to trade, and some to arms. Their nation ought not to be judged by the individuals at Grand Cairo: those who become soldiers are adventurers, most of them guilty of crimes, and banished from their country, by the fear of justice. These mercenary, faithless, lawless, soldiers abandon themselves to every excess, and always sell themselves to that Bey who is the best bidder.



There are not many real Turks here, exclusive of the Janissaries and Affabs; who, abusing their power, pillage Egyptians, and foreigners, and employ every means to amass great riches. They sometimes become formidable to the Pacha and Beys; and sell their suffrages. Like the Mograbians, they are neither disciplined, understand the art of gunnery, nor would it be possible for them to oppose the military science of the Europeans.

The Syrian Christians, Greeks, and Jews, addict themselves entirely to commerce, exchange, and the mechanic arts. Their ductile cunning promotes them, occasionally, to be commissioners of the customs, and receivers of the revenues of Egypt; but their honesty may not be depended on, and their arts should always be watched. Having obtained power, they employ it to oppress European Merchants, invent exactions, and shackle their commerce. Many of them are Goldsmiths, and work in gold, silver, and jewellery, with tolerable skill. Their performances in fillagree are estimable. Several of them have established manufactories of light stuffs, made from Bengal cotton and  
the

the filk of Syria, which are purchased by the natives. Though well woven, these stuffs fail in the dye, the colours being neither so vivid, nor so unfading, as those of India; which we must attribute to the ignorance of the artists, for Egypt produces excellent indigo, carthamus, and various dyes. Their linen cloths have the same defect. Egyptian flax, formerly so renowned, has lost nothing of its excellence: the fibres are long, soft, and filky, and would make beautiful cloth; but the spinners are so bad that their linen is very coarse.

The amount of these inhabitants, Sir, so different in their manners, religion, and nations, is near four millions; whom eight thousand Mamluks govern. This will not long excite your surprize, when you recollect that, under Augustus, three cohorts were sufficient to guard the Thebais; as Strabo informs us, who, one of the first historians of antiquity, was an ocular witness of the fact.

“ The Egyptian is an extremely populous,  
“ but not a warlike, nation: nor are the  
“ neighbouring people more so. Cornelius  
“ Gallus, the first Roman governor sent to  
“ Egypt,

“ Egypt, marched against the inhabitants of  
 “ Heroopolis (*o*), who had revolted, and  
 “ again subjected them with a few soldiers.  
 “ Severe taxes having excited a general re-  
 “ bellion in the Thebais, it was immediately  
 “ quelled, on his appearance. Petronius,  
 “ after him, heading a few cohorts, repelled  
 “ the impetuosity of many thousand Alex-  
 “ andrians, who had attacked him, leaving  
 “ a great number dead on the field of battle.  
 “ Ælius Gallus, entering Arabia with a part  
 “ of the troops that garrisoned Egypt, prov-  
 “ ed, by his victories, how little these people  
 “ were addicted to war; and, had it not  
 “ been for the treachery of Syllæus, would  
 “ have conquered Arabia Felix. During his  
 “ absence, the Ethiopians made an irruption  
 “ into the Thebais, threw down the statues  
 “ of Cæsar, carried off the feeble garrisons  
 “ of Syene, Philæ and Elephantina. Petro-  
 “ nius pursued them, with ten thousand foot  
 “ and eight hundred horse; and, though  
 “ their army was thirty thousand strong,  
 “ forced them to retire to Pielcha, a city in

(*o*) This city is absolutely destroyed, and its ruins  
 buried under the sands of the isthmus of Suez.

“ Ethiopia. Not obtaining a restitution of  
“ the captives, by his ambassadors, he pene-  
“ trated their country, and gave them battle.  
“ Their ill-armed, undisciplined, troops  
“ could not withstand the Roman valour :  
“ some fled to the deserts, some to the capi-  
“ tal, and others escaped, by swimming, to  
“ an island in the river. Among the latter  
“ were several generals of Candace, the war-  
“ like queen of Ethiopia. Petronius crossed  
“ the Nile, in boats, took them all prisoners,  
“ sent them to the city of Alexandria, and  
“ afterwards laid siege to Pselcha, which he  
“ subjected, a part of the inhabitants perish-  
“ ing in the attack. He next marched for  
“ Premnis, a place fortified by nature, to  
“ arrive at which he crossed the vast sandy  
“ deserts where the army of Cambyfes was  
“ smothered in the sands (*p*). Carrying it  
“ by assault, he then besieged Napata, where  
“ was the son of Candace, in a royal palace.  
“ The queen, from a neighbouring fortress,  
“ sent ambassadors to treat of peace ; offering  
“ to restore the captives, and statues, to the

(*p*) This confirms what I have cited from Herodotus.

“ Roman.

“ Roman general, who, without listening to  
“ proposals, attacked and vanquished the  
“ place; but the young prince escaped by  
“ flight. Believing it would be difficult to  
“ penetrate farther, he returned to Egypt;  
“ carrying with him great wealth, and  
“ leaving four hundred men to garrison  
“ Premnis, with stores and provisions for  
“ two years.”

This passage, Sir, perfectly describes the imbecility of the Egyptians, and Ethiopians, in the Roman times; and they are still the same. Long slavery has but extinguished the little energy they had; and their ignorance of arms even surpasses their cowardice. During the alarm which civil war spread through Grand Cairo, we heard the six pieces of artillery play from the castle on the city, and observed that the gunners employed half an hour in loading them; for this was the space of time between each discharge. You will judge, Sir, whether such troops could, a moment, withstand a few European regiments. Any warlike nation that should attack Egypt would conquer it, without impediment, and Ethiopia, with equal facility; after which,  
masters

masters of their gold and their waters, they might send the Nile, at pleasure, through Egypt, where they might maintain inexhaustible plenty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    X V .

O N   T H E   M A R R I A G E S   O F   T H E  
E G Y P T I A N S .

*Marriage a church-ceremony among Christians, and indissoluble. The Legislature of Arabia, guided by custom, and on the authority of the Patriarchs, has permitted divorces, but has fixed bounds to the caprice of men. Marriage ceremonies observed by Mahometans and Copts.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**M**ARRIAGE, among Christians, is a holy rite, and indissoluble. Laws, in certain cases, suspend, but do not annihilate its effects; wherefore, it is necessary the parties should perfectly know each other, and that their wills should be free, since their own happiness, and that of their children, depend on this knowledge, and this freedom. Oriental manners, so different from European, have obliged legislators to render wedlock a less permanent

permanent contract. Here the two sexes live separate, and never converse together. How then can a young man and maiden, who have not seen each other, swear inviolable faith and love? Such an oath, exposing them to perjury, would but be a source of disorder. Mahomet, well acquainted with the heart of man, and authorized by the Patriarchs, has permitted repudiation. After endeavouring to prevent it, by prescribing that respect, that tenderness, which ought to be the supreme pleasure of husband and wife, he adds, “ Those who shall swear never  
 “ more to have commerce with their wives  
 “ shall wait four months (*q*), during which  
 “ if they return to them, the Lord is kind  
 “ and merciful.—If divorce be still determined  
 “ on, God sees and knows all things.”

This, Sir, authorizes repudiation, but leaves God the judge of its lawfulness. In the continuation of this chapter, which is an abridgment of the laws of Mahomet, the

(*q*) When a Mahometan swears never more to know his wife, four months delay are granted him, during which he may reconcile himself to her, but if the time be past he must put her from him. She is free, and may marry another. *Koran, Chap. 2.*

legislature



legislature endeavours to prescribe bounds to the fickleness of man. A mussulman may not take a wife without assigning her a portion, according to his substance. If he wishes to part from her, he sends for the judge, declares in his presence, he puts her from him, and, when the four months of probation are expired, he returns the wealth she brought, and the portion stipulated in the marriage contract. If they have children, the husband detains the boys, and the wife takes away the girls; after which they become free, and may marry elsewhere. Wives are not subjected, as is supposed in Europe, to eternal slavery; having real cause of complaint, they implore protection from the laws, and break their chains: but, in this case, they lose their portion, and the wealth they brought to the house of the husband, though they recover their liberty.

A Mahometan sometimes swears, without sufficient reason, never more to know his wife; but, repenting, he may be reconciled to her, without the mediation of the Cadi. The law-giver, in the following verse, has set bounds to this caprice. “ He, who thrice  
 “ shall repudiate one woman, may not re-  
 3 “ claim

“ claim her, till she shall have been received  
 “ in the bed of another husband, who shall  
 “ repudiate her also. They may then come  
 “ together again, if they believe they can  
 “ observe the commandments of God (*r*).”

A husband thus circumstanced, and who fears a separation himself has sought, endeavours to elude the law, seeks a friend, on whom he can rely, shuts him up with his wife, in the presence of witnesses, and waits the consequence of this singular scene, at the door. The dilemma is a delicate one, and does not always succeed as he could wish. If the friend, leaving the chamber, says—  
 “ Behold my wife, whom I put away”—  
 the first husband recovers his right: but if, forgetting friendship in the arms of love, he declares her his wife, he takes her with him without opposition. By such laws has Mahomet endeavoured to ensure peace and happiness in marriage; making it a social state, the duration of which ought incessantly to be promoted, by reciprocal attentions, and the birth of children. Nor do the married often use the liberty they possess; divorces are much less common than they are

(*r*) *Koran*, chap. 2.

usually thought to be : many are even satisfied with one wife, and do not profit by the law which allows four. This moderation must be attributed to the separate and retired lives they lead, the charms of which they strongly feel, and, particularly, to the affection which both husband and wife have for their children, who, educated in the house of their fathers, become their support and consolation.

The female relations make matches for the young men. They meet most of the maidens of the city at the bath, whom they perfectly describe; and, the choice made, the alliance is mentioned to the father of the female, the portion specified, and, if he consents, they make him presents. The parties agreed, the female relations and friends of the virgin take her to the bath, strip her with ceremony, bathe, knead, and perfume her, stain the nails of her hands and feet, of a golden yellow, with *benna*, blacken her eye-lids with *copel*, sprinkle precious essences in her hair, and wash her whole body with rose water. Without other ornament than their long and floating tresses, the matrons lead the novice round the apartment,

apartment, and prepare her for the mysteries of hymen, calm the palpitations of timidity, recount the happiness she will possess, and vaunt the beauty and wealth of her young husband. The remainder of the day is passed in feasting, dancing, and singing songs adapted to the occasion.

On the morrow, the same persons go to her house, tear her, as it were, violently, from the arms of her afflicted mother, and triumphantly conduct her to the house of her husband. The procession usually begins in the evening; dancers go before her, with their feet tied to stilts, and carrying balancing poles; numerous slaves display the effects, furniture, and jewels destined to her use; troops of dancing girls keep time with their instruments; matrons, richly cloathed, walk with a grave pace; and the young bride appears under a magnificent canopy, borne by four slaves, sustained by her mother and sisters, and entirely covered by a veil, embroidered with gold, pearls, and diamonds. A long file of flambeaux illumine the procession, and the Almai, in chorus, occasionally sing verses in praise of the bride and bridegroom. I have twenty times be-

held such pompous processions, in the streets of Cairo, where the longest route is always chosen ; they being vain of displaying their whole splendour, on these occasions.

When come to the house of the husband, the women go on the first floor, whence they perceive, through the blinds of a gallery, all that passes below. The men, who are assembled in the hall, do not mix with them, but pass a part of the night in banquetting, drinking coffee and sherbet, and hearing music. The Almai descend, throw off their veils, and display their agility and address ; exhibiting, to the sound of the tambour de basque, cymbals and castanets, pantomimes in which they represent the combats of Hymen, the struggles of the bride, and the artifices of love. Nothing can exceed their voluptuous postures, and licentious attitudes ; they want not words to make themselves understood ; their unreserved gestures cannot be mistaken. Several times have I been present at such like scenes, and always surprised that a people, who, in public, respect women so much, should so passionately love lascivious dances. Having ended, the Almai, in chorus, chaunt the epithalamium

(so

(so famous among the Greeks) and extol the allurements of the bride, more beauteous than the moon, fresher than the rose, sweeter than the jacinth, and the bliss of that mortal who shall enjoy so many charms. During the ceremony, she several times passes before the bridegroom, and always in different dresses, to display her wealth and elegance. The guests having retired, the husband enters the nuptial chamber, the veil is removed, and, for the first time, he beholds his wife. If a maiden, tokens of virginity must appear; otherwise he may send her back, on the morrow, to her parents, which is the greatest dishonour a family can sustain; wherefore, there is no country on earth where girls are guarded with such care, or where the husband is more certain to espouse a virgin.

Such are the laws and ceremonies of marriage among the Egyptians, which rich and poor scrupulously observe. The daughter of the mechanic is, in like manner, conducted to her spouse; the only difference consists in the surrounding paraphernalia. Instead of flambeaux, they burn fir, in braziers carried on poles, and the stilt-dancers

and tambour de basque, supply the want or Almai, and musicians. The poor man's daughter, wanting attendants and canopies, borrows a veil, and marches to the sound of cymbals, or bits of metal, which her indigent followers strike in time, without tune.

Nearly the same ceremonies are observed by the Copts; but they have a custom of betrothing young girls only six or seven years old, which is done by putting a ring on the finger. They often obtain permission, from her friends, to educate her, till she arrives at puberty. Divorces, bathing, and marriage processions, are also practised by the schismatic Christians; only they can have but one wife at a time. You will find descriptions, in the Arabian Tales, much resembling those I have sent you: the author of that agreeable work, being perfectly acquainted with the manners and customs of his country, has ably depicted them; and, by the truth of his portraits, rendered his book inestimable. Failing in this, our Oriental romance writers offend most; and, having never travelled in the East, call the  
whims

whims of fancy Oriental tales: Turks, Arabs, and Persians, are ridiculously disguised under a French habit, and grotesque descriptions are given instead of truth and nature.

I have the honor to be, &c.



## L E T T E R XVI.

REVOLUTIONS OF COMMERCE IN  
EGYPT.

*State of commerce under the Pharaohs, Persians, and Ptolemies, Commerce created a powerful navy under the Romans, and, directed by the Egyptians, penetrated to Bengal: become feeble under the monarchs of the Lower Empire: was almost lost under the Arabs: re-established by the Venetians, who opened the ports of Egypt, but, losing their trade, to the Portuguese, lost also their shipping, and distant provinces. An account of the present commerce of Egypt.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

IN the preceding letters, Sir, I have mentioned some particulars relative to the trade of the principal cities of Egypt; but these scattered ideas would be unsatisfactory, in

an age when all the courts of Europe hold commerce to be an inexhaustible source of wealth and power. I will endeavour to give you a hasty sketch of its revolutions, from the most remote antiquity to the present; and, however difficult the task, the utility that may result to my country encourages me in the undertaking.

The Pharaohs knew the benefits of commerce. The numerous canals they dug had a two-fold intent, that of spreading fertility and transporting the productions of the country throughout the kingdom. The fairs established in the Delta, and the Thebais, united the inhabitants of the distant provinces. Each brought the fruit of his industry, and, by mutual barter, the whole nation participated of the arts and agriculture. The necessity of going every where by water, during the inundation, with the charms of the cool air, and the delightful views of the Nile, habituated the Egyptians to the practice; and might lead us to suspect the first vessels, in which men ventured themselves on the inconstant sea, were built in Egypt. Pleasure, interest, and religion, those powerful motives to action, made them

row from one temple to another, and every where there were feasts, illuminations, and assemblies, where traders and wealthy people found their advantage. The Egyptians, therefore, may be regarded as one of the most ancient sea-faring nations who sailed on the Red Sea. Long before the famous expedition of the argonauts, Danaus (*s*) carried into Greece the arts of navigation and trade. Sesostris, his brother, soon after, sent two armies, one by land, and the other by sea, to conquer Asia; and, while he subjected the inland states, a fleet of four hundred vessels took the sea ports of the Gulph of Arabia, passed the Straits of Babelmandel (*t*), and entered the Indian Ocean, where vessels so large had never been seen. This commerce in Egypt is more ancient than in Asia, nor has it ever ceased since those remote ages.

Sesostris founded various colonies, during his conquests, one of which fortified themselves on the coast of Phœnicia. Tyre raised her ramparts, felled the cedars of Lebanon,

(*s*) Herodotus.

(*t*) *i. e.* The gate of handkerchiefs, so named because Egypt has ever received through it the cotton cloths of which they make handkerchiefs, and which they still call Mandel.

to build ships, and began to dispute the glory of navigation with the mother country, sending ships to the pillars of Hercules, and every where extending arts and trade (*u*). The Egyptians, on their part, sailing up the Bosphorus, entered the Euxine, bartering with their brethren, settled in Colchis (*x*) the productions of their country for those of the North; while the fleets of the Red Sea brought the rich stuffs, perfumes, pearls and diamonds of the East.

Become commercial, Egypt soon arrived at great power, and raised temples, obelisks, and colossal statues, which, when beheld, could not but be admired. The priests, by continually observing the heavens, taught seamen Astronomy, which guided them through the boundless deep. Wealthy at home, and mighty abroad, Egypt propagated trade and science, and, spreading agriculture

(*u*) Clemens Alexandrinus says the Phœnicians received letters from the Egyptians, and transmitted them to the Greeks. In another place, he adds, Cadmus, the Phœnician, carried them into Greece, wherefore Herodotus calls the Greek characters Phœnician.

(*x*) Herodotus asserts Sesostris left a colony here, with which the Egyptians traded.

through

through the savage states of Greece, prepared them for civilization. Thus the hardy mariners of Europe, sent by Monarchs, the friends of humanity, reclaim from barbarism the islanders of the South Sea, by communicating our productions and our arts. The ferocious cannibal of New Zealand will cease to devour men, when sheep, cows, and corn have procured him plenty of food. Agriculture will establish society and laws, and they will enjoy the benefits of civilized nations. Their islands seem not to contain those precious metals which excite avarice; slavery, therefore, will not destroy, among them, the seeds of virtue. Like the Greeks, who deified their first benefactors, they will erect monuments to Louis XVI. and George III. These are actions which immortalize kings, and the remembrance of which is never lost to posterity. Enlightened by the great men who gained instruction in the schools of Memphis and Heliopolis, Greece was divided into several republics, each of which small states endeavoured to obtain shipping and trade. Tyre continued to send her vessels over the whole Mediterranean, and kings were adorned by her purple. Pſammethichus

chus (*y*), the friend of the Greeks, opened the ports of Egypt to them; and Nechos, his son, attempted to form a communication between the Nile and the Red Sea; but the great obstacles he met, and the loss of a multitude of workmen, occasioned him to renounce the project. He formed another which proves how far the art of Navigation was carried. He equipped ships at Suez, gave the command of them to Phœnician captains (*z*), and ordered them to coast Africa. These able seamen left the gulph of Arabia, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, returned northward, and, after three years navigation, arrived at the pillars of Hercules, whence they sailed for Egypt. This was the first time this grand Continent had been coasted; but the difficulties of a voyage so long, when ships were obliged never to lose sight of shore, made them renounce it in future, contenting themselves to trade in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean. Egypt had then the most powerful marine, and was the richest country on earth.

Apries, son of Nechos, in a naval combat, defeated the united fleets of Cyprus and Tyre,

(*y*) Herodotus.

(*z*) Herodot. lib. 4.

the two most famous maritime people.— Emboldened by this success, Amasis sent a fleet to conquer Cyprus, which taking, he there found abundance of wood, and stores, proper for building ships. Become master of the Mediterranean, that he might strengthen commerce, he called the Greeks into his country, and permitted them to build Naucratis, near the canopic mouth of the Nile: but, to prevent his new allies from becoming too numerous, he obliged their ships to unlade only at this city (*a*), which the established fairs, and continual arrival of vessels, rendered very commercial. Temples were erected here at the joint expence of the Ionians, Dorians, and Eolians; but, be their magnificence what it might, they wanted the Egyptian solidity; in vain the traveller searches for their ruins.

The kingdom was now at the height of prosperity. The arts approached perfection. Astronomy calculated eclipses; Sculpture fashioned the hardest marble at its pleasure; precious stones were engraved; Mechanics raised enormous weights; and Chemistry stained glass, gave greater brilliancy to

(*a*) Herodot. lib. 2.

gems (*b*), and dyed with colours that were not to be effaced. Agriculture had enriched this country with the products of India, which it afterward presented to Greece, Italy, and all Europe. And every time we behold bread, white as snow, rice, peas, beans, and various other pulse, we ought to thank the Egyptians, who communicated those precious things to the Greeks, from whom they passed to the Romans, and, afterward, to the Gauls.

When famine raged in neighbouring nations, they, like the sons of Jacob, came to Memphis for food. Such were the advantages, in part, due to the commerce of the Pharaohs, who sent their fleets from the island of Taprobana, now Ceylon, to the ports of Spain. The polished people of Africa and Europe from them received articles of utility, luxury, and pleasure; and to the benefits of trade must we, in part, attribute the admirable works of which they are the authors. Never did nation possess such treasures, cultivate arts and sciences with greater ardor, or raise monuments so stately. The stuffs of Bengal, the gold dust which rolls in

(*b*) Plin. Hist. Nat.



the torrents of Ethiopia, the pearls of Ormuz, were brought to Memphis, become the most commercial city on earth.

Such was the flourishing state of Egypt when invaded by Cambyfes with innumerable hosts. Amasis, imprudently, disgusted the native military, by preferring Grecian troops, and a hundred and fifty thousand men abandoned their country; by which desertion this fine kingdom, ceding to the Persian, was ravaged with fire and sword. Intoxicated with victory, the ferocious conqueror destroyed the academies, and left barbarian marks on the monuments, which still remain. After the loss of armies, in mad expeditions against the temple of Jupiter Ammon, and the Ethiopians, he left troops in Egypt, and returned to his kingdom. Commerce suffered from these excesses, but the impulse had been given, and, though shackled, it still continued its course. Darius, son of Hytaspes, who knew its worth, restored its former vigour, and favoured it throughout his empire; he even wished to continue the canal Nechos had begun, and only receded from the false opinion given him that the Red Sea was higher than the Mediterranean, and would overflow Egypt.

Egypt. Scylax, by his command, descended the river Indus, examined the coasts of a part of Asia, east and west, and, after two years navigation, returned to the isthmus of Suez. The information he obtained determined the Persian king to invade India, where he made great conquests, by which the Egyptians profited, in extending their trade, repairing their losses, and re-establishing their marine. Subservient to the ambition of this prince against the Greeks (*c*), they supplied his army with provisions, assisted him in building the memorable bridge over the Bosphorus, and, in the sea fight off the island Eubæa, seized five of the enemy's ships. Their valour and abilities as mariners were conspicuous in the battles of Salamis and Mycale; but the love of liberty, inflaming the republics of Sparta and Athens, and the great men they produced, defeated the efforts of Asia and Africa, conspiring their ruin.

The next age produced a Prince of an impetuous character and superior genius, who, by combating the Greeks, learned to conquer the world. Become King, he departed, at

(*c*) Herodot. lib. 4.

the head of forty thousand men, overthrew the Satraps of Asia minor, vanquished the proud Tyre, who had refused him for a master, and turned his arms against Egypt, which impatiently supported the Persian yoke, and, half way meeting Alexander, was conquered without a battle. Charmed with the reception he met from the Egyptians, and intoxicated by flattering hopes from the oracle of Ammon (*d*), he left them the same form of government, and the same religion. With a mind enlarged by the education a philosopher bestowed, and with views of universal empire, this prince wished not, in conquering, to destroy the world. To make his power sure in Egypt, the importance of which he knew, he founded a great city, with three harbours capable of containing the fleets of Greece, and the merchandize of all nations. He himself traced the plan of commerce which was to unite the scattered members of his vast states; but he was cut off in the flower of his age, and past over the earth like a torrent. His generals, dividing his spoils, became mighty monarchs. Ptolemy, son of Lagus, obtaining Egypt, endeavoured

(*d*) Quintus Curtius.

to execute the grand designs of his master, invited the merchants of Syria and Greece to Alexander, and, by constantly protecting them, rendered his kingdom flourishing, which gave him the means of advantageously facing his foes, and conquering the isle of Cyprus. The Rhodians, his faithful allies, refusing to unite their fleets with those of Antigonus to attack Ptolemy, were besieged by Demetrius Poliorcetes ; but, by the great succors they received, in corn and naval stores, from Ptolemy, they triumphed over this formidable warrior, and their gratitude bestowed the name of Soter, *saviour*, on their defender.

Amid the tumults of war, this first of the Ptolemies was zealous for the prosperity of his new kingdom. The low coasts of Egypt made the shores very dangerous, on which vessels often were wrecked before they were seen ; he, therefore, built that stately tower on the isle of Pharos, which overlooks the ocean, and on which was inscribed, in large characters, *TO THE PROTECTING GODS FOR THE BENEFIT OF NAVIGATORS*. The white marble made it visible by day-light, and it was lighted at night to direct the course of ships. All antiquity has praised

this magnificent work. Thus the French shall bless the memory of a protecting king, who formed a mighty haven, amidst the waves; and, hereafter, beholding squadrons in safety, secured by piers which an engineer of genius has marvellously constructed at Cherbourg, posterity shall say, here Louis XVI. enchained the waves of the sea.

The havens of Alexandria, situated to the west, north, and south, received the merchandize of the whole world, and the city became, as Strabo calls it, the greatest emporium on earth. Ptolemy did more, he established an academy, whose learned members went, by his command, to examine the various countries of the earth, their riches and productions. Thus, in the present age, have the French monarchs, imitating his example, sent academicians from the pole to the equator to measure the globe, and obtain knowledge beneficial to geography and navigation. The son of Lagus, though involved in war with the Kings of Syria, collected those manuscripts, from all parts, which composed the famous library the fate of which we weep: his monuments have been erased, but his glory shall never perish;

for, while he drove the foe from his dominions, he laboured for the happiness of his subjects.

Ptolemy Philadelphus followed his father's steps, and rendered Egypt powerful and happy. The pomp he displayed at coming to the crown proves the extensive commerce of the kingdom. It is circumstantially described by Athenæus: I must be more concise. The products of all climates were here assembled. Female slaves of Asia and Africa, in the habits of their country, began the procession; camels loaded with incense, saffron, cinnamon, and precious aromatics, followed; a body of Ethiopians bore ebony wood, and four hundred elephants teeth; Abyssinians were loaded with gold dust, collected on the banks of their torrents; Indians displayed to the people the riches, pearls, and diamonds, their kingdoms produced; numbers of wild beasts were led by their keepers; the beautiful birds of Africa, the sheep of Abyssinia, Yemen, and Greece, the milk white oxen of India, the bears of the north, leopards, panthers, lynxes, the camelopard, and the rhinoceros, followed in the train. Objects so various could only

have been found among a people who traded to all nations.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, better informed, or more fortunate, than Nechos and Darius, continued the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, which work he had the glory to atchieve. It began at the pelusiac branch, and was carried to Arfinoe, now Aggerout (*e*). Locks, constructed at its mouth, prevented a too hasty stream ; and there were lakes, which supplied it, where boats might stop. History does not inform us how far this canal was advantageous to commerce ; but, as it was necessary to sail quite up the Arabian gulph, the far end of which is narrow and most dangerous, to come to it, Ptolemy opened another route for merchants, by founding a town which, after his mother, he named Berenice, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the latitude of Syene. From Cophtos to Berenice he constructed cisterns, and inns, where caravans might find refreshments amid the deserts. It was twelve days journey across burning sands, and Berenice was an

(*e*) Aggerout is now two leagues from the port of Suez. Thus far the sea has retired since Ptolemy,

open shore, exposed to all winds, which inconvenience occasioned mariners to prefer the port of the Rat, now Coffeir, where they found good anchorage; since when the trade of India has followed the road I before described.

The Ptolemies kept up a formidable marine, in the Red Sea and Mediterranean, to protect the Egyptian merchants. Theocritus (*f*) affirms they had ninety-seven first-rate ships, several of which were two hundred feet long, beside a multitude of small vessels, and four thousand barks to bear orders throughout the empire. By such means, Ptolemy Philadelphus extended his conquests far into Ethiophia, and Yemen, and reigned over thirty-three thousand cities. These facts would appear incredible, were they not attested by writers of good authority, and did we not know to what a degree of splendor commerce might raise a state, and the infinite resources an enlightened king might find, in the situation of Egypt, bordering on two seas, and enjoying the treasures of an inexhaustible soil.

(*f*) Theocrit. Idyl. 17.



Following the example of his predecessors, Ptolemy Evergetes founded his power on trade, to which he gave every encouragement, maintained the marine of the Red Sea, subjugated several of the kings of the Homeritæ, who reigned in Arabia Felix, commanded them to guard the high roads, and effectually protected caravans from the Arabs. The wealth of Egypt was at its utmost under his reign, and the abundance of gold and riches of all kinds were productive of excessive luxury in Alexandria, and corrupted the court of its kings. Most men are virtuous in mediocrity : misfortune elevates the mind and imparts energy, but excessive prosperity enervates ; and, by opening the flood-gates of vice, shuts those of happiness.

The Ptolemies, enjoying supreme power, abandoned themselves to effeminacy, irresolution, and disorders which infected the morals of their subjects ; for the corruption of kingdoms always begins with the great. The fourth of these princes, however, performed some good acts. At the entreaty of the Rhodians, he gave liberty to Andromachus, father of Achæus, sovereign of a part of Asia Minor, who had allied himself to the Byzantines

zantines to exact tribute from all ships passing the strait of the Hellespont. In return for this benefit, Achæus renounced his allies, and they their pretensions, and commerce, again unfettered, continued its usual course. He, also, kept up, and augmented, the marine his ancestors had created. Under his reign were vessels of a size so enormous that they have never since been equalled. Plutarch (g) describes one of his vessels with forty benches of rowers, three hundred and seventy-three feet long, and sixty-four high at the poop. This enormous ship, beside which our three-deckers would seem small frigates, contained four hundred sailors to work her, four thousand rowers, and about three thousand fighting men. The arts of ship building and navigation must have been brought to great perfection among the Egyptians, who could build and work such immense vessels, that resembled floating towns. The reigns of the succeeding Ptolemies present excess of luxury in the capital, and kings indulging in licentiousness; yet these very facts demonstrate the treasures of com-

(g) Plutarch in Demetrio.

merce, since, amidst unbounded expence, the country was rich and flourishing. At some moments, absorbed as they were in pleasure, they thought of its welfare. Ptolemy Physcon sent Eudoxus, the Cyziceniian, ambassador, to various potentates of India, and the accounts this celebrated navigator brought added to the knowledge they had of those countries, and encreased the avidity of merchants, who undertook new expeditions to the East, and penetrated the Ganges as far as Bengal. After the king's death, his widow, Cleopatra, commanded Eudoxus to visit the nations at the extremity of Africa; and, sailing from the Red Sea, he arrived on the coast of Sofala. Finding the prow of a ship, he knew to be from Cadiz, on the shore, he formed the project of coasting this great continent. Returning to Egypt, he found Ptolemy Lathyrus on the throne, who did not love him, and attempted his meditated enterprize. Passing the straits of Babelmandel, he doubled the cape, and landed at the pillars of Hercules. This was the second time a voyage so daring had been performed. It is easy to judge how difficult was the enterprize, how able and intrepid the  
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the mariners must be, and what obstacles and perils he was exposed to, in times when the compass directed not his course. It is easier, at present, to sail round the world.

The merchants of Alexandria, under Ptolemy IX. continued to navigate the Euxine, the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulph, and to the farthest Ind. Not to the good administration of the Egyptian monarchs was this extensive commerce indebted, but to lasting establishments; and, when not impeded, to the routine that long had been traced.

During the Alexandrian war, which Ptolemy XII. sustained against Cæsar, the latter burnt a hundred and ten large ships, and the Egyptians still had resources enabling them to equip a fleet, capable of facing the enemy. But who could withstand the genius of Cæsar! The efforts of the Alexandrians were insufficient, opposed to the conqueror of the Gauls. To a woman the glory of triumphing over this great man was reserved, Cleopatra subjected the conqueror, by charms irresistible. During the course of her life, this queen displayed magnificence and prodigality of which history contains not a second

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cond example. Cited by Antony (*b*), then at Tarsus in Cilicia, to render an account of her conduct, she went to meet the Roman General. Passing the Mediterranean, she sailed up the Cydnus, in a vessel the description of which resembles what the poets give us of the shell of Venus. The sails were purple, the prow and sides of glittering gold, and the oars, which kept time with the music, were plated with silver. The Queen, reclining under a canopy, enriched with gold and inestimable gems, corresponded, in dress, to the splendor of her ship. The richest robes, bedecked with pearls and diamonds, veiled, but did not conceal, her charms. Like the Cytherean goddess, round her were numerous children, habited like cupids, agitating the air this new deity breathed; while clouding perfumes, incessantly burnt, were wafted to the shores. Antony, intending to punish Cleopatra, soon felt the power of her beauty; and, forgetting the judge, became the lover. Yet not to beauty alone was the Egyptian Queen indebted for victory. She had wit, and a cultivated understanding;

(*b*) Plut. in Antonio.

knew

knew the Oriental languages; spoke the Greek, Ethiopic, Hebrew, Parthian, Syriac, and Persian, and conversed, in their own idioms, with the various foreigners who incessantly came to the port of Alexandria, that, after the fall of Carthage and Corinth, was become the emporium of the world (*i*), and contained three hundred thousand free people, with, at least, double the number of slaves.

Cleopatra had vanquished Cæsar and Antony, but in vain attempted Augustus, a cold and artful man; and, fearing to be led in triumph by this pompous conqueror, she killed herself. Egypt was then governed by the Romans, and was to Rome what Peru has been to Spain, and Bengal is to England: supplying Italy with gold and silver in such abundance that provisions, merchandize, and lands, were doubled in value; thus hastening the ruin of the empire.

Robbed of their monarchs, and subject to the Romans, the Egyptians became their factors; the former ardently undertaking the commerce of India, the product of which, according to Pliny, was a hundredfold, and,

(i) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

purſuing the ſteps of their predeceſſors, ſome, entering the Indus, penetrated up the country; others, landing at the iſle of Ceylon, and others, doubling cape Comorin, proceeded up the Ganges as far as Palibothra (*k*), a mighty city, to which the Egyptians long had traded, and where was a vaſt concourſe of Oriental nations. They brought back cotton-cloths, and filks, which Auguſtus firſt wore, after whom the Romans, ſtudyng luxury, imagined perfumes, pearls, and diamonds, real wants: now that the mulberry tree and filkworm are tranſplanted into Europe, ſtuffs, unknown to the Roman Conſuls, are worn by men of all conditions. They have not yet, however, acquired the excellence of thoſe of Bengal, or the durability of their colours; perhaps the ſmall Indian colony, ſettled in France by an Admiral whoſe talents, virtues, and victories, honour his country, may diſcloſe the ſecrets of the Eaſt to the French manufacturers.

In proportion as the Romans narrowed the limits of their empire, they adopted the

(*k*) Strabo, lib. 15.

vices and customs of the conquered people. Egypt was the kingdom that influenced their manners most, because it procured them most wealth. Fine linnen, and cotton-cloths, made at Alexandria, superb carpets, and variegated chrystals, were transported to Rome; while the abundant productions of the Thebais supplied the proud city with provisions. After this she had neither manufactures nor agriculture, and, in a few years, was surrounded by immense parks, and vast gardens; on the spots dictators had ploughed, where they had inhabited their rustic mansions, delicious groves, cascades, parterres, and palaces were beheld. Asiatic effeminacy enervated the proud republicans. In vain did the wisest of their Emperors endeavour to resist the torrent; the masters of the world had tasted the charms of indolence; nations paid them tribute, Egypt gave them corn, and they imagined they had only to receive the labours of the conquered, and the earth's homage. Its expiring ray extinguished by Augustus, freedom gave place to slavery, and all its consequent vices. The Romans became less desirous of commanding than of enjoying festivals, and shows. The thirst of  
gold



gold compleated corruption ; all was venality at Rome ; soldiers and armies were bought, and the pretorian bands set the empire to sale.

To Byzantium Constantine transported the seat of empire, which soon became divided, and its destruction followed. The western fell first, because it wanted that wealth which agriculture and morality give, and which impart stability to kingdoms. Italy was a garden, and its inhabitants, sunk in luxury, could not resist the multitudinous barbarians. Egypt long was the support of the tottering throne of Constantinople, and, spite of the rigors some of the emperors exercised over it, or of that destructive monopoly which is too often still renewed in great cities, it continued to be enriched by commerce, and furnished its sovereigns with resources against their numerous enemies. Cous, possessing the trade of India, flourished several ages, and became the rival of Alexandria. Its ships forgot not the way to Bengal, but brought the merchandize most in request. The time, however, approached when the glory of Egypt, together with commerce, agriculture, and arts, was to decline.

Mahomet,

Mahomet, possessed of a genius equal to revolutions so vast, created a religion for the nations of Arabia, scattered over the deserts, which was to arm them against the whole world. Emboldened by success, he sent ambassadors to the Emperors of Persia, Constantinople, Abyssinia, and the governor of Memphis, to invite them to embrace Islamism, or pay him tribute. History affords not another instance of a mission so audacious, and he must have been thought a madman, had not his genius supplied him with the means of maintaining an attempt thus daring. Travelling had taught him the feebleness of neighbouring nations, and he knew warriors educated in his school might undertake, and execute, all things. The Greeks having assassinated one of his ambassadors, he armed three thousand men; which handful of soldiers, having traversed Arabia Deserta, where three generals appointed by the prophet perished, Khaled put himself at the head of the Arabs, and, by prodigies of valour, vanquished a hundred thousand Greeks. Thus encouraged, Mahomet departed, with thirty thousand men, and subjected the country as far as the frontiers of Syria. Death cut short

his exploits, but his successors, animated by his example, and heated by the enthusiasm he had communicated, overthrew neighbouring nations, and conquered Egypt, and a part of the East.

Become a province, under the Califs, Egypt gradually lost its commerce and arts. The ferocious Amrou having burnt the magnificent library, collected by the Ptolemies, the learned fled to Constantinople and the Grecian Isles. The zeal of the first Mahometans not permitting them to hold alliance with Christian princes, they neglected the trade of the Mediterranean, and confined themselves to that of the Red Sea, and inland commerce. Agriculture still flourished; some of the Arab princes encouraged the sciences; and, at length, the Venetians gained admission into their ports, established consuls, and, obtaining leave to settle up the country, carried on the trade of India under the protection of the Egyptians: hence they derived vast advantages, and became the first mariners of Europe, which they supplied with all the productions of Asia and Africa. For some time, the Genoese partook these benefits; but the Venetian marine, rapidly increasing, reigned

reigned triumphant, in the Mediterranean: Daring from success, they profited by the ruin of the Greeks to deprive the Ottomans of some scattered parts of their empire. Having seized the Morea, Candia, and several islands in the Archipelago, they sent their squadrons to the Dardanelles, and humbled Mahometan pride. They and their allies vanquished the whole naval power of the Turks, at the battle of Lepanto. Enriched by the commerce of the Red Sea and India, this republic saved Italy, and, for two centuries, was the bulwark of Christendom.

Venice was at the height of her prosperity when a valourous nation, excited by a prince learned in Geography and Astronomy, endeavoured to find a new passage to the Indies. Henry, brother of the King of Portugal, taught by History, knew Africa might be coasted; and, fitting out several vessels, assisted by the compass, discovered the Azore and Canary Islands. One of his captains proceeded to the cape that terminates Africa; being assailed by furious winds, he named it the tempestuous cape, and returned; but the prince changed the name to that of Good Hope. These attempts, long fruitless, must

give us a high idea of Egyptian navigation, since they, twice, had performed the task, without any guide, except the stars and their own genius. Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese gentleman, at length, had the glory of doubling this famous cape; and, after landing on the coast of Malabar, returned triumphant to Lisbon. The precious stones he brought, and the pompous account he gave of the treasures of the Indian kings, enflamed the Portuguese; who, in a few years, conquered Cochin, Goa, and many other cities, whence they obtained immense riches.

Egypt was taken from the Arabs by the Turks, who, incited, and supplied with materials and wood for ship-building, by the Venetians, fitted out a fleet on the Red Sea, and endeavoured to stop the Portuguese conquests, and drive them from their new establishments. Albuquerque, their governor, fought, gloriously, against the Turkish fleet, entered the Arabian gulph, took several ports, and determined to crush Egypt. Having made a treaty with the emperor of Abyssinia, he engaged to turn the course of the Nile into the Red Sea. What horrors will not ambition impel men to commit! To

insure the exclusive commerce of India to his nation, this admiral would not have scrupled to destroy four millions of souls, and reduce a kingdom to a desert. His letters lead us to believe the thing was practicable; but, happily for the Egyptians, death relieved them from the aspiring Albuquerque, and the emperor of Abyssinia dropped the infamous project.

While the Portuguese contended for the wealth of the East with Venetians and Egyptians, the Spaniards, led on by Columbus, had discovered America, and the new world was soon insufficient for their cupidity. The Lisbon mariners, following the track of Vasco de Gama, touched at the coast of Malabar, and proceeded to the Indian Archipelago; and the men of Cadiz went to the Moluccas. These rival people, sailing nearly at the same time, and each traversing half the circumference of the globe, on its opposite sides, met in the middle. They divided the spoil, not without staining the land with their blood, and that of the wretched inhabitants of Celebes, whom, after reducing to slavery, they were equally eager to plunder. The aromatics, spices,

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gold

gold and diamonds, with which they returned loaded, roused the courts of Europe from their lethargy, who had treated the grand projects of the immortal Columbus as dreams. England and France built ships, desirous to partake of these new discoveries. Hence we may date the decline of Venice, the foundation of whose power was the trade of Egypt and India, and the loss of which reduced her to all her former insignificance. The ruin of her marine followed that of her commerce, and prevented her from defending her distant provinces. The Turks took the Morea, Candia, and the islands she possessed in the Archipelago, and she now has only a rock or two, which the Porte has left her because they are useless.

The maritime powers of Europe, at present, found their prosperity on commerce; and each is desirous the balance should be in its favour. Russia, too far north to send fleets to India, by the Cape of Good Hope, and enter in competition with nations more happily situated, has opened a route, known to the Romans and Genoese, sending her ships by the Volga to the Caspian Sea; and  
her

her merchants endeavour to obtain the products of Persia, and the northern provinces of the Mogul. Already they trade in the rich silks of Ghilan; and Catherine II. will, no doubt, invade these wealthy territories, the first opportunity. England, France, and Holland, supply Europe with the products of India; especially the first, which, in Bengal, has formed a kingdom of vast extent, and, become mistress of this trade, disputes the glory of navigation with the whole earth.

In her present state, Egypt, without arts or shipping, and groaning under the tyranny of her Beys, cannot profit by her situation to rival the Europeans. Her ignorant mariners, far from navigating the Indian, scarcely dare venture over the Red Sea; their greatest effort is their annual voyage to Moka, where their ill-armed saicks, incapable of defence, are laden with the coffee of Yemen, the muslins and cloths of Bengal, brought them by the Banyans, the perfumes of Arabia, and the pearls of the isles of Beharim. The coffee they buy for four-pence per pound, at Moka, they sell for fifteen-pence, at Cairo; and this article, alone,



amounts to half a million sterling. Most of it is sent to Constantinople, Greece, Marseilles, and the coast of Syria ; the rest they consume themselves.

The English attempted to rob them of this trade, but the Egyptians complained to government, and the former were powerfully opposed. Ali Bey having given safety to the caravans, and opened the ports of Egypt to foreigners, some English ships came to Suez, loaded with the stuffs of Bengal, for which they found a ready sale ; but political views have prohibited this traffic, and it is possessed by the Egyptians. Yet what could they effect against the squadrons of Europe ? Soon or late, they must submit to receive, from strangers, the precious merchandize they dearly obtain from Moka, which will be supplied at a much cheaper rate ; nay, foreigners might find means to obtain permission to carry on this trade.

Egypt, even in decline, might appear respectable among powerful nations, because she contains, within herself, the true source of wealth. Her corn, with which she supplies Arabia, Syria, and a part of the Archipelago, her rice, sent over the Mediterranean

anean as far as Marseilles, her carthamus flowers, with which the people of Provence annually load several ships, her sal-ammoniac, transported through all Egypt, her abundant souda, her excellent flax, esteemed by the Italians, her blue cloths, that cloath in part the neighbouring nations, all are objects that will make the balance of trade in her favour. The Abyssinians bring her gold dust, elephants teeth, and other precious commodities, which they exchange for her productions. The cloths, lead, arms, and some gold lace from Lyons, which French ships bring, do not equal what they receive; they pay the balance in Turkish piastres. The copper kitchen furniture, and furs, which the Turks send to Alexandria, are far below the amount of the corn, rice, lentils, coffee, and perfumes they take back; most of which are paid for in ready money. Except Moka and Mecca, where the Egyptians annually leave a great part of their sequins, all who trade with them bring them silver and gold. So plentiful are these metals that Ali Bey, flying to Syria, carried with him three million and a half sterling; and Ismael Bey, escaping, some years

years after, loaded fifty camels with sequins, patacas (*k*), pearls, and jewellery.

If, destitute of shipping and manufactures, and reduced to the sole advantages of its soil, Egypt is still so wealthy, imagine, Sir, what she might be, governed by an enlightened people. What cloths might be fabricated from her fine wool, what linen from her flax, what muslins from the two species of cotton she produces, the one annual the other perennial; what silks from the worm which, here, if introduced, would thrive so well in a climate that has neither rain nor tempests; what an influx of prosperity from opening her canals, repairing her mounds, and restoring to agriculture a third of the grounds buried under the sands; what wealth from opening her mines of emeralds, famous for almost equalling the diamond in duration; and from the granite, the porphyry, and the alabaster, which many of her mountains contain! With what utility might her indigo, carthamus, and other substances, excellent for dying, scattered through her deserts, be employed! These, Sir, are not

(*k*) A silver coin, worth five shillings.

chimerical riches ; Egypt has possessed them for ages : and a wise administration would restore all the prolific treasures of nature.

Thus, Sir, have I given an abstract of the vicissitudes of commerce, from the remotest to the present times ; and the splendor it once enjoyed must impress the mind with vast ideas of what it might become.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XVII.

ON THE ANCIENT WORSHIP OF THE  
EGYPTIANS, AND, PARTICULARLY,  
ON ATHOR, ONE OF THEIR DEITIES.

*Athor, or Night, according to the Egyptian priests, was the symbol of the darkness of Chaos, before the creation, of which, animated by the breath of the Almighty, the world was formed. They afterwards held the moon to be a type of this darkness, and introduced its worship. This idea they still farther extended to winter and summer.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

RELIGION and Man were born together; he, placed on a globe where experience daily taught him his own feebleness, sought protectors from surrounding dangers; and she was the daughter of want and gratitude. Before he was blest by revelation, objects which astonished, from which he received

ceived the greatest benefits, or dreaded most, by turns, attracted veneration. To rivers, seas, storms, and the sun, he addressed his prayers, and erected his altars. The less he knew of the phænomena of nature, the more he believed in hidden powers. All nations have adored, under different names, invisible spirits, either praying for protection, or deprecating wrath. Men enlightened by sublime philosophy, only, can behold him who presides over the universe, or suppose a plurality of Gods absurd. Yet am I persuaded writers, either prejudiced or superficial, have calumniated nations; by pretending they worship insensible stone, or despicable animals. The sculptured marble and the consecrated ox were but emblems of the deities they adored; as the statues, and images, in our temples, are but the symbols of saints, or God. Since the islanders of Otaheite, where civilization scarcely has begun, regard the bananas, and animals, within their Morais, but as offerings to their Eatooa (1), why should we insist that the Egyptians wor-

(1) Invisible deities. *Cook's Voyage.*

shipped the onion and the crocodile (*m*) ?  
 No rational man can entertain an opinion  
 so unfounded. Could the people called the  
 wise, who cultivated science so successfully,  
 among whom Solon learned those laws he  
 gave the Athenians, and Plato the immorta-  
 lity of the soul, adopt a worship so absurd ?  
 No, Sir, the philosophers of Egypt never  
 deified animals ; nor did they ever, like the  
 Greeks, raise heroes to the rank of gods.  
 Astronomy and the phænomena of nature  
 were the foundation of religion ; they placed  
 an invifible fpirit above the ftars, to whom  
 they imputed the wondrous harmony of the  
 univerfe. The vulgar, indeed, whose fec-  
 ble fight beheld objects only, often adored  
 the fymbol, inftead of the deity. I will  
 endeavour to elucidate their religious doc-  
 trines, which the learned Jablonfki has fo  
 well done before me ; and, following his  
 footfteps, add citations from the beft authors  
 of antiquity ; for, in a matter fo important,

(*m*) Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus, Ælian, all men-  
 tion the holy animals of Egypt, but no where call them  
 Gods, holding them, on the contrary, to be living types  
 of the deities to which they were confecrated.

we must leave nothing to fancy, conjecture, or chance.

One of the most antient of the Egyptian deities was Athor; which, in the Coptic, signifies Night (*n*). The priests, by this word, did not mean that privation of light which succeeds sun-set; but the darkness of Chaos, before creation; of which, animating it by his breath, God made all creatures. In their opinion, this mysterious night was the origin of things. Damascius (*o*), speaking of antient Egyptian Theology, says, “ they held Darkness to be the first principle, which human reason might not comprehend, and which they thrice celebrated in their sacred hymns.” Sanchoniathon, imbued with this doctrine, says, “ from the wind Kolpia, and his wife Baaou, were mortals created (*p*).” Kolpia is a Hebrew word, which signifies the breath of God; and Baaou the void. Thus the Creator’s voice called being from non-entity; and this Theology differs little from that of Genesis, which says, “ And the earth was without

(*n*) Jablonſki. Pantheon Ægyptiacum. Tom. I.

(*o*) As cited by Cudworth.

(*p*) Jablonſki, tom. I.



“ form and void, and darkness was upon the  
 “ face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved  
 “ (brooded) upon the face of the waters (*q*).”  
 Simplicius (*r*) pretends, “ that the words,  
 “ and God called the light day, and the  
 “ darkness night, were taken from Egyptian  
 “ fables.” But, granting Moses to have  
 learned this doctrine from the priests of  
 Memphis, having freed it from the absurdities  
 in which it was enveloped, it is not the less  
 divine. This antient people, descendants of  
 Misraim, grandson of Noah, might, like the  
 Israelites, have received the light of Revela-  
 tion from their common father; and, if they  
 have obscured its pure flame, the leader of  
 the Hebrews has restored its lustre.

Orpheus, initiated in the Egyptian myste-  
 ries, first brought their religious opinions  
 into Greece, and sung them in harmonious  
 verse. “ In the beginning,” says he, “ Ether  
 “ was created by God, and from his bosom  
 “ came Chaos, and dark Night, which  
 “ spread over all below Ether.” In the  
 dialogue between Jupiter and Night, the  
 poet, assuming his right, personifies the lat-

(*q*) Genesis, I. 2.

(*r*) Comment. in Aristotel. Physic. lib. 8.

ter, and makes the Creator thus speak (*s*).  
 “ Nurse of the Gods, immortal Night——  
 “ How must I wisely proceed in creating the  
 “ immortal Gods? How form the Universe  
 “ into one whole, where each thing shall sepa-  
 “ rately exist?” Night replies, “ Encompass  
 “ Creation with the immense Ether; place  
 “ the Heavens in the centre; and under the  
 “ Heavens the earth, surrounded by the sea,  
 “ and crowned by the stars.”

The Greeks eagerly received the religion Orphæus sung, glowing with the primitive ideas which the antient Egyptians entertained on the origin of things. Philosophers spread a veil over it, impenetrable to the vulgar; and poets, personifying the elements, composed a fabulous Theogony. Thus enveloped, thus concealed, it was difficult to perceive truth. The religious opinions of Egypt long were preserved in the temples of Greece. Pausanias, visiting the country, saw, at Megara, *the Oracle of Night*; and, in the temple of Diana, at Ephesus, *the Sanctuary of Night*; where, probably, all that related to Athor was taught.

(*s*) Vide Eschenbach.

This symbolical Deity, by which the Egyptians represented the passive principle of things, became, in the language of the Greek philosophers, Venus, or the mother of the world. Orpheus, likewise, taught them this allegory (*t*). “Night, the mother  
“ of Gods and men, I sing. Night, the  
“ origin of all created beings, by us named  
“ Venus.” The poets pursued this metaphysical idea, and, wanting a deity that might embellish their songs, they derived her from the foam of the sea; first in Beauty, and Goddess of Pleasure, she animated the world, she gave life to all. Ovid celebrates her power in these allegorical verses (*u*).

*Illa quidem totum dignissima temperat orbem :*

*Illa tenet nullo regna minora Deo :*

*Juraque dat cælo, terræ, natalibus undis ;*

*Perque suos initus continet omne genus.*

*Illa Deos omnes (longum enumerare) creavit .*

*Illa satis causas arboribusque dedit.*

The Egyptian priests, describing Night as the Deity from whose bosom the Eternal had drawn all creatures, knowing the vulgar

(*t*) Jablonski, tom. I.

(*u*) Ovid. Fast. lib. 4.

must have sensible objects, led them to adore the Moon, reigning in darkness. They, no doubt, at first, held this planet to be but an emblem of Night, and divine power; but, as the symbol often obscures the Deity, the people prayed to the Moon, and to her erected their altars.

Philosophers still understood the doctrine; and, by Night, Athor, and Venus, meant that season when the sun, having passed the equator, remains in the austral hemisphere; the days then being shorter, and the nights longer. “ Philosophers (x) have honoured  
 “ the upper hemisphere with the name of  
 “ Venus, and the lower with that of Proser-  
 “ pine. The Assyrians and Phœnicians repre-  
 “ sent this goddess in tears, because the sun,  
 “ passing through the signs of the Zodiac,  
 “ enters the austral hemisphere, where, so long  
 “ as he remains, the days are shorter, and  
 “ Venus is feigned to weep the absence of the  
 “ god, dead for a time, and detained by Pro-  
 “ serpine. Her statue is on Mount Lebanon  
 “ (the celebrated Venus Aphacitis) veiled, and  
 “ with a sorrowful countenance. The statue,

(x) Macrob. lib. I. cap. 21.

“ beside representing the grief of the goddess,  
 “ is also the symbol of Winter.”

The following passage demonstrates this opinion came from Egypt (y). “ In the  
 “ month of Athyr (z) the Egyptians say  
 “ Osiris (the sun) is dead ; nights then are  
 “ longer, darkness increases, and his power  
 “ is diminished. The priests perform gloomy  
 “ ceremonies, and shew the people a gilded  
 “ ox, covered with a black veil (or pall) fig-  
 “ nifying the grief of the goddess Isis, or the  
 “ Moon.” In Egypt, the ox is a symbol of  
 Osiris, and the earth.

Thus, the Egyptian Athor first signified that mysterious Night which was over chaos, before the creation ; afterward the Moon ; and, lastly, Winter ; by this analogy, the Orientals, Greeks and Romans, have named Athor Venus the Queen of the World, and the Mother of Delights. The doctrine is the same, though its form be changed ; passing from one nation to another, and from the lips of philosophers to poets.

(y) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(z) Athyr, the name of a month. The Egyptians call Venus, Athor, after whom they name the third month of their year. Orion the grammarian.

Temples

Temples were dedicated to Athor, in Egypt. Herodotus, who gives the names of many remarkable places there, mentions Athar-Beki, the city of Athor, which Strabo (*a*), and Diodorus Siculus (*b*), translate Aphroditopolis; the city of Venus. Ælian (*c*), speaking of a town in the Hermetopolitan Nomos, says, “ Here they worship “ Venus, and pay peculiar adoration to the “ cow.” The same author informs us Isis, or the Moon, was represented with the horns of a cow. Thus this animal was the emblem of the Moon; and the black veil, with which it was covered during winter, could only signify to the people the decrease of day, and the grief of Isis; though, certainly, to the priests, it meant the darkness of chaos before creation. In the map of Egypt, you will find three towns, which the Greek geographers have named Aphroditopolis, but which the natives call Athar-Beki.

Such is the small information, Sir, we may collect, from the fragments the antients

(*a*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*b*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*c*) Ælian. De Nat. Animal. lib. 11.

have left us, relative to the religious opinions of the Egyptians concerning Athor. Had not their books perished with the Ptolemæan Library, did not their hieroglyphics conceal the knowledge they transmitted to posterity, we, no doubt, should find, among a people so learned, and so near the origin of human nature, ideas more clear and satisfactory; but let us enjoy what remains, and endeavour, somewhat, to pervade the mysteries of their religion.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    X V I I I

OF PHTHA, NEITH, AND CNEPH.

*The Egyptians adored the Supreme Being under the names Phtba, Neith, and Cneph; attributes, signifying his power, wisdom, and goodness. The temple of Phtba, at Memphis, of Neith, at Sais, and of Cneph, in the island of Elephantina. The pure worship preserved only by the Priests, and initiated; the Vulgar forgot the Creator in his works.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** HAVE spoken, Sir, of Athor, and the dark Abyfs. But the Chaos of the Greek and Latin poets could produce nothing of itself; the Egyptian philosophers acknowledge the Spirit which thence formed the Universe, and established that still unalterable order; which Spirit they called Phtha, Ordainer(*d*).

(*d*) La Croix, Tresor Epistolaire, liv. 3. Jablonski, tom. I. says Phtha, in Coptic, signifies *Ordainer of Things*.



Jamblichus (*e*) informs us the Egyptians called that efficient spirit, which does all things with truth and wisdom, Phtha; and the Greeks Vulcan, only considering the art with which it produces. This spirit, to which they assign the highest rank, they say, gave chaos first the form of an egg, and, from that, afterward, created all things. Thales, the Milesian, taught by the priests of Memphis, says (*f*), “ Water is the principle of all things, and God the spirit which has formed the universe from this humid principle.” The verse of Genesis (*g*) “ and the spirit of God moved (brooded) upon the face of the waters,” is very correspondent to the Egyptian doctrine of the creation. We may naturally suppose Moses, educated in the court of Pharaoh, there obtained a part of this knowledge, and, afterward, disencumbered truth of mystery and fable. The Egyptians, that they might give the Creator a sensible form, attributed two sexes to him; that is, they acknowledged a power resident in him

(*e*) De Mysteriis, sect. 8.

(*f*) Clc. de Nat. Deorum. lib. 4.

(*g*) Chap. i. ver. 2.

which could produce without the assistance of any other being. Synesius, full of this ancient theology, speaking of him, says, “ The father, mother, male, and female, “ art thou (*b*).”

On the obelisk of granite, transported from Egypt to Rome, among the hieroglyphics, interpreted by Hermapion, is the following remarkable passage, relative to Ramestes, king of Heliopolis (*i*). “ Him hath “ Phtha, father of the gods, chosen.” The words, father of the gods, meant the stars, which the sages of Egypt held to be the most striking emblems of the deity, and which the people really adored. In the time of Herodotus (*k*), fire, water, earth, heaven, the sun, moon, day, and night, had divine honours paid them, but were only the gods of the vulgar; the initiated had another faith, and acknowledged the author of nature, only, who drew all creatures from non-entiy,

The first dynasty of Manetho includes the reign of the gods in Egypt (*l*), at the head

(*b*) Hymn III.

(*i*) Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 17.

(*k*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*l*) Manetho apud Syncellum.

of whom is Phtha, or Vulcan, and, after him, the sun, his son, which passage, understood allegorically, is not contrary to sound theology. The sun, the work of the Creator, may be considered as his son, and the Egyptians, to ennoble their origin, worshipped the Creator as the first of their kings. To each of these material gods Manetho assigns a certain length of reign; which we must understand as solar and lunar cycles, invented by astronomers (*m*). This dynasty proves Phtha antecedent to time, the course of which was regulated, when men studied the heavens, by the regular succession of these visible deities. The Egyptian priest positively declares (*n*), “No determinate epocha can be fixed to Phtha, because he shines as well in darkness as in day.” The stars appear and disappear, their empire had a beginning, therefore is not eternal. But the invisible spirit was before time; his power shines, everlastingly, in his works, and his reign is immutable.

In the sanctuaries of their temples the Egyptian priests secluded this sublime doc-

(*m*) Vide Vignoles, tom. II,

(*n*) M aneth. apud Syncell.

trine, either transmitted by the first men or imagined by their own genius; as by Abraham, from the efforts of reason, and the study of astronomy (*o*). Having enveloped them in allegories which themselves, only, could unfold, they left the people in total ignorance, favoured their idolatry, and, at the death of each individual, thus prayed: “ O Sun, and ye other gods, who bestow  
“ life, receive me; restore me to the eternal  
“ deities, that I may dwell with them (*p*).”

The Greeks pretend that, according to the Egyptians, Phtha was only the most pure and subtle fire, above the ether, whence souls came to animate bodies; wherefore they named him Vulcan, who presided over that element. “ The sages of Egypt,” says Servius (*q*), “ embalmed, in order to pre-

(*o*) Clemens Alexandrinus affirms Abraham attained the knowledge of one God by the study of astronomy, which appears to be the opinion of the Arabs. Mahomet, having collected their traditions, represents the patriarch of the faithful looking to the heavens, and, after observing, with amazement, the appearance and disappearance of sun, moon, and stars, which he, at first, had supposed divinities, he exclaims, “ I will not worship gods that rise and  
“ set.”

(*p*) Porphyry. lib. 6.

(*q*) Serv. Comment. in Æneid. lib. 3,

“ serve

“ serve bodies ; and that their souls, re-  
 “ maining longer, might not quit them to  
 “ animate others ; the Romans, on the con-  
 “ trary, immediately burn them, that they  
 “ may return to their primitive nature.”

Herodotus (*r*) supposes this metempsychosis came first from Egypt. If these authors may be credited, the Egyptians held Phtha, or the Upper Ether, to be the being which successively gave life to the universe. The Platonists and Pythagoreans held the same belief, and that the soul, immortal in its nature, leaving the body, returned to the soul of the world, whence it first came (*s*). These are the opinions of the Greeks ; who, no doubt, disfigured the religion of Egypt, by mingling their own metaphysical reveries. What I have cited, in a former part of this letter, proves Phtha was anciently regarded as the ordaining spirit, the grand architect of the universe ; he was principally adored at Memphis, where he had a temple (*t*) ;

(*r*) Lib. 2.

(*s*) Plutarch de placitis philosoph. lib. 4.

(*t*) Described by Herodotus and Diodorus. Suidas adds the people of Memphis adored Vulcan by the name of Phtha.

but,

but, as I have said, the worship of visible deities prevailed with the people over that of the Supreme Being, to whom the priests only offered incense.

Phtha must not be separated from that god of the Egyptians which, also, was the creating spirit: Neith signifies the disposer of all things (*u*). The first signified God taken in a general sense; the second, more particularly, characterised his wisdom. Neith was worshipped chiefly at Sais, a city of the Delta, where the priests had a famous college. Plato (*x*), who had frequented it, thus speaks. “Sais, the capital of its district, is a considerable city, of which Amasis was king. Neith, the Minerva (*Αθήνη*) of the Greeks, is the titular divinity.” The following inscription, engraved in hieroglyphics, was on the door of the temple, and imports the sublime idea they had conceived of Neith (*y*). *I am what is, what was, what shall be; mortal has*

(*u*) Jablonski, tom. I.

(*x*) Plato in Timæo.

(*y*) Proclus cites this inscription, in his learned commentary on the Timæus of Plato; Plutarch in his Isis and Osiris.

*never raised up my tunic (veil): the sun is the fruit of my womb.* This definition only can agree with God; who, self-existent, has neither beginning nor end, and includes in himself the past, present, and to come (*z*). This incomprehensible spirit conceals himself from man, who cannot raise up the veil. These words, “the sun is the fruit of my womb,” clearly demonstrate Neith and Phtha to be the same. Manetho, also, affirms, in a figurative sense, Phtha is the father of the sun. The Phœnicians, who received their religion and knowledge from their Egyptian brethren, also acknowledge Minerva, or Neith, for the author of nature (*a*).

The priests of Egypt more particularly adored, in Neith, the divine wisdom which guides the world, and enlightens men, and made her the protector of the arts. The warrior wore on his finger a ring, on which

(*z*) Man may be considered as the image of God, in certain respects; including, in himself, the past, present, and to come: the remembrance of what he was, is, and hopes to be, makes him enjoy, at the same time, these three modes of being. The Creator has, therefore, said, in Genesis, “Let us make man in our image.”

(*a*) Julian. Orat. 4.

the scarabæus was engraved; the reason of which we learn from Horapollon (*b*). “ The Egyptians pretend the world is composed of male and female parts, and paint a scarab to represent Minerva (*c*).” This ring, worn by soldiers, was a token of the homage they paid the deity whose emblem they bore, and who disposed of the fate of battles. Psammenitus (*d*), instructed by Neith, declared kings were under the protection of God, and from him derived their knowledge.

Cadmus, the Phœnician, was the first who carried this worship into Greece, and gave the name of Neith (*e*) to one of the gates of the Grecian Thebes. Egyptian theology was taught here, with which the poets soon mingled their charming allegories. Neith, their Pallas, rose, armed, from the brain of Jupiter, and was celebrated by them

(*b*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. 1. [This is a disputed passage. *T.*]

(*c*) I before said the Egyptians, sensibly to mark the productive power of God, have painted the two sexes, and, as they ascribe both sexes to the scarab, they made that the emblem of Neith.

(*d*) Jablonski, tom I.

(*e*) Jablonski, ubi supra.



as the goddesses of battles, and of arts. Philosophers, still, saw truth through the obscuring veil; but not so the people, who worshipped a fabulous deity.

“ The first woman who wove was an Egyptian. She was seated; wherefore the Egyptians represent Minerva seated (*f*).” They meant, no doubt, by this attitude, to remind men she had taught them arts, and that from her they derived their knowledge. The Greeks, ever imitating them, engraved, painted, and sculptured, Minerva seated (*g*).

After adoring the power of the Creator in Phtha, and his wisdom in Neith, the Egyptians worshipped his goodness under the name of Cneph, or the greatest good (*h*). “ The priests of Egypt called Cneph the Architect of the Universe (*i*).” Strabo mentions a temple of this deity, in the isle of Elephantina, which temple still subsists, as described in Letter XIII. vol. I. The symbol of this god was a serpent, according to Eusebius. “ The serpent, within a circle,

(*f*) Eustath. in Iliad. I.

(*g*) Strabo, lib. 13.

(*h*) Jablonki, tom. I.

(*i*) Eusebius de Præp. Evangel. lib. 3.

“ touching it at the two opposite points of its  
 “ circumference, signifies the good Genius.”

A particular species of serpent was chosen (*k*). “ There are sacred serpents, near  
 “ Thebes, which are harmless (*l*), having  
 “ two horns on the top of the head; when  
 “ they die they are buried in the temple of  
 “ Jupiter.” The name of Cneph (*m*), or  
 good genius, was bestowed on it, as well as  
 the divinity it represented, and the people’s  
 veneration, perhaps, went no farther than  
 the serpent. “ I one day saw two men,  
 “ in Egypt, contesting; one having per-  
 “ ceived a serpent, called it *Agathodaimon*,  
 “ (*Ἀγαθόδαιμον*) and struggled to get it (*n*).”

The good genius of the Greeks and Romans must not be confounded with that of the Egyptians; the first understanding by this title an intermediate order, between divine and human; the latter, the beneficence of him who presides over heaven and earth,

(*k*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*l*) These serpents, honoured by the name of Haridi, still are famous, as treated by the priests of Achmim.

(*m*) The Phœnicians call the serpent, *Gooa Genius*, for the same reason the Egyptians name it *Cneph*.

(*n*) Plut. de Iside & Osiride.

and whose will directs the stars through the immensity of space.

These are the religious opinions of the Egyptians concerning Phtha, Neith, and Cneph, three attributes of the same god, characterizing his wisdom, power, and goodness. The worship was gradually lost, or remained concealed in the temples; and the people, deceived by their priests, who gave them only symbols, or incapable of conceiving an infinite spirit, which every where marks his presence, yet every where escapes our senses, honoured his works, to which they addressed their offerings and prayers.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## LETTER XIX.

ON THE VISIBLE DEITIES OF EGYPT.

*The Egyptians first adored the sun, under its proper name, Phra; and, afterward, under that of Osiris. This god became very famous, had temples, and sacrifices, throughout Egypt; which originated with astronomers, who measured time by the course of the sun, more regular than that of the moon. The word Osiris, derived from Osb Iri, author of time, denotes the reason the priests had for creating this allegoric deity.*

To M. L. M.

## Grand Cairo.

“THE ancient Egyptians, contemplating  
“ the vaulted heavens, and admiring the  
“ marvellous order of the universe, held the  
“ sun and moon to be eternal deities, and  
“ paid them particular adoration; naming  
Y-2 “ the

“ the one Osiris, and the other Isis (*s*).” This assertion is too general: it ought, to make it more conformable to truth, to have excepted the kings, the initiated, and, particularly, the priests, who did not believe that idolatry they taught the people; nay, it is reasonable to suppose, their first doctrine was that these luminous bodies were the work of God. Be this as it may, the Egyptians, from the remotest times, have adored the sun and moon, under the titles of the King and Queen of Heaven (*p*). The sun was first called Phra (*q*). The father-in-law of the patriarch Joseph was named, according to the septuagint, Petephra, Priest of the Sun. Astronomers, observing its course and principal effects, gave it the symbolical name of Osiris, which religion sanctified. “ It is known that Osiris is only the sun: when the Egyptians describe it, in their hieroglyphics, they paint a sceptre and an eye (*r*).” They could not better pourtray this luminary, to which they attri-

(*s*) Diod. Sicul. lib. 1.

(*p*) Jeremiah, chapters 7. and 44.

(*q*) Jablonski, tom. 1.

(*r*) Macrobian. Saturnal. lib. 1.

buted the empire of Heaven. Thus Martianus Capella (*s*), in his fine hymn, says, “ Eye of the world, bright Olympian torch; “ Latium calls thee Sun; because, after “ thy author, thou art the source of light. “ The Nile names thee Serapis: and Mem- “ phis, adoring Osiris, adores thee.” Some authors, also, have called the Nile Osiris. Plutarch gives the reason. “ The Egyp- “ tians hold the Nile to be the preserver “ of their country, and that it draws its “ source from Osiris (*t*).” The vapours, raised by the sun, and condensed in the atmosphere, fall in rain, and form the great river that gives wealth to Egypt. In this sense, Homer calls it the stream of Jupiter (*u*). The Egyptians, says Herodotus (*x*), pretend that Osiris and Bacchus are the same; which opinion has been espoused by many of the Greeks, and is not improbable. The Egyptians made Osiris travel from one end of the world to the other, described him as the king who had conquered

(*s*) Lib. 2.

(*t*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*u*) Jupiter and the sun, or Osiris, are the same.

(*x*) Lib. 2.

the world, and heaped blessings on man. The Greeks, attributing similar gifts and conquests to Bacchus, have said he was Osiris; however, in the sacred language of Egypt, these travels only meant the course of the sun, and the good he did men, which allegories have always been customary among the Orientals. Thus the Psalmist (z) “ He  
 “ hath set a tabernacle for the sun, which  
 “ is a bridegroom coming out of his cham-  
 “ ber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run  
 “ a race. His going forth is from the end  
 “ of Heaven, and his circuit unto the ends  
 “ of it: and there is nothing hid from the  
 “ heat thereof.” Tibullus has literally given the opinions of the Greeks in graceful and harmonious verse (a):

Primus aratra manu solerti fecit Osiris,  
 Et teneram terro sollicitavit humum.  
 Primus inexpertæ commisit semina terræ,  
 Pomaque non notis legit ab arboribus.  
 Hic docuit teneram palis adjungere vitæ:  
 Hic viridem dura cedere falcem comam.

A trait, which the best authors of antiquity give, evidently demonstrates the Greeks

(z) Psalm xix.

(a) Tibull. lib. i. eleg. 8.

were wrong in wishing to establish a perfect similitude between Bacchus and Osiris. The first was honoured as the author of the vine; but the Egyptians, far from attributing its culture to Osiris, held wine in abhorrence. “ The Egyptians (*b*) never drank wine, before Psammetichus (*c*); holding this liquor to be the blood of the giants, who, having made war on the gods, had perished in battle, and that the vine sprang from the earth mingled with their blood: nor did they offer it in libations, thinking it odious to the gods.” This sacred fable passed from Egypt to Persia, and Clemens Alexandrinus (*d*) tells us, the Magi most carefully abstained from wine. There was a law which forbid its use among the Arabs (*e*), and Ovington (*f*) affirms that the Bramins, at present, detest the liquor, and hold it in equal horror with Manes, who

(*b*) Plutarch de Iside et Osiride.

(*c*) One of the last of the Egyptian Pharaohs.

(*d*) Strom. 3.

(*e*) Diod. Sic. lib 1.

(*f*) Ovington's Travels, vol. 1.



supposed it the blood of dæmons. Whence this Oriental aversion for wine originated would be difficult to say; but exist it did, which, probably, was one reason why it was forbidden by Mahomet (g). Perhaps we should seek for the cause in the curse of Noah, pronounced upon Ham, who insulted his father, finding him drunk. But, whether or no, the Egyptians detested it, and could not attribute the culture of the vine to Osiris.

But what does this name mean? And why given to the sun? This question has excited the researches of the ancients and moderns, which they have laboured to resolve. Diodorus (h) and Horapollon (i) say Osiris signifies Πολυφθαλμος, many-eyed; which interpretation might apply to the sun, but will not explain the word Osiris; for, though *Os* or *Osh* means much, in Egyptian, *Iris* has no relation to the eye. “The name of Osiris (k) means many things, and may be

(g) Wine is an abomination of the devil. *Koran*.

(h) Lib. 1.

(i) Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

(k) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

“ interpreted many ways. It expresses ef-  
 “ ficacious power, and benevolence.” This,  
 still, is not the literal sense. The learned  
 Jablonski (*l*) interprets the word more natu-  
 rally. “ Osiris comes from *Osh Iri, He who*  
 “ *makes time.*” The Egyptians understand  
 the same by this expression, as God, speaking  
 of the Sun and Moon (*m*), “ Let there be  
 “ lights in the firmament of the Heaven,  
 “ to divide the day from the night : and let  
 “ them be for signs, and for seasons, and for  
 “ days, and years.” The following passage  
 favours this opinion. “ The Egyptians paint  
 “ the Sun borne in a ship, or on a crocodile ;  
 “ which, emblematically, signifies that the  
 “ Sun, traversing the mild and humid air,  
 “ begets time (*n*).”

After long observation, the astronomers  
 of Egypt regulated the year by the course of  
 the sun. The great golden circle, of three  
 hundred and sixty-five cubits, which they  
 placed over the tomb of Osymandyas, and

(*l*) Tom. I.

(*m*) Genesis, I. 14.

(*n*) Clem. Alexand. apud Euseb. de Prep. Evan. lib. 3.

on which the rising and setting of the stars, for each day in the year, were described, is a clear proof of their labours and discoveries.

“ The priests of Thebes principally applied  
 “ themselves to Astronomy and Philosophy,  
 “ and measured time by the Sun, and not  
 “ by the Moon (o).” Julius Cæsar, who  
 passed a year among them, and was instructed  
 in their learning, reformed the Roman calendar, which was very defective. “ This  
 “ prince, imitating the Egyptians, the only  
 “ people perfectly informed of divine things,  
 “ calculated the year from the progress of  
 “ the Sun, which ends his revolution in  
 “ three hundred and sixty-five days, and six  
 “ hours (p).” The same author, in the  
 spirit of the astronomers, holds the measurement  
 of the year to be the principal use of  
 the Sun. The solar year was found by the  
 academy of Heliopolis, under the reign of  
 Aseth (q), 1325 years before Christ, and  
 320 after the departure of the Israelites : the

(o) Strabo, lib. 17.

(p) Macrobian. Saturnal. lib. 1.

(q) Vignoles Chronologie, tom. 1.

priests who, till then, had honoured the Sun under his proper name *Fbra*, in memory of this important event bestowed that of *Ofiris*, or Author of Time.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XX.

AMMON AND HERCULES EMBLEMS OF  
THE SUN.

*Amoun, whence the Greeks derived Ammon, and the Latins Jupiter Ammon, particularly adored at Thebes, which is called in Scripture the city of Ammon, and by the Greeks Diospolis, the city of Jupiter. The statue covered by the skin and head of a ram. This Deity, typifying the vernal Sun, uttered oracles, in a temple built in the Lybian deserts. The statue of Hercules, worshipped with Ammon, at the vernal equinox, signified the strength of the Sun at this season.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**T**HE Egyptians, applying themselves to the study of Astronomy, perceived the aspect of the Sun varied according to the sign in which he was found, his motions slower at the solstices, quicker at the equinoxes, and that

that his influence was more or less according. To these phenomena they assigned various characteristic marks. Having adopted hieroglyphics, which speak by symbols, only, they, by turns, painted the Sun as a child, a man grown, and an old man, sometimes joyful, sometimes sad, or resplendent in light; by which the priests understood his astronomical aspects, or physical effects. Accustomed to behold these figures on their temples, the vulgar forgot the symbol, and adored them as Deities. Macrobius, initiated in the mysteries of this antient religion, thus unveils them (*r*); “ To mark the shortest  
“ day in the year, the Egyptians, at the  
“ winter solstice, take the symbol of the  
“ Sun from the sanctuary, under the form  
“ of a child; whom, growing rapidly, at the  
“ vernal equinox, they represent as a youth;  
“ and, mature at the summer solstice, they  
“ give him a full face with a long beard.  
“ At last they depict him as an old man, to  
“ signify his decline.” Adopted, no doubt, before the invention of writing, these emblems, preserved by the priests, expressed

(*r*) Macrobius. Saturnal. lib. i.

the four ages of the Sun, and seasons of the year.

Let us examine what the Egyptians meant by the name Ammon, so famous in antiquity. Amoun, says Plutarch (s), whence we derive Ammon, is the Egyptian name for Jupiter. This god was particularly adored at Thebes, which the sacred books call Hammonno, the possession of Hammon, and the septuagint (t) the city of Ammon. “ The inhabitants of Thebes hold the ram  
“ to be sacred, and eat not his flesh; yet,  
“ on the annual festival of Jupiter, they be-  
“ head, and skin, the ram, with which they  
“ cover the statue of the God (u).” The meaning of this ceremony we are taught by Proclus (x), who says, the Egyptians held the ram in veneration, and because this sign, the first of the Zodiac, presaged fruits, Eusebius adds, the symbol indicated

(s) De Iside et Osiride. Herodotus and Diodorus, also, give Jupiter the surname of Ammon.

(t) Ezekiel, cap. 30. The Greeks and Romans call it *Diœpolis*, the city of Jupiter.

(u) Herod. lib. 2.

(x) Proclus in Timæum.

the conjunction of the Sun and Moon in the ram (*y*).

You recollect, Sir, what the ceremony was the priests of Ammon observed when they consulted the oracle. Faithful followers of the opinions of their forefathers, who figured the Sun making a voyage in a ship, they bore, in a boat, the statue of the god, formed of precious stones, and having a ram's head. Authorities and facts, so numerous, demonstrate that Ammon, among the Egyptian Astronomers, represented the Sun, in which sense Diodorus might say Osiris and Ammon are the same (*z*). Yet these two names do not denote the same phænomena; the first signified the Sun to be the Author of Time, the second announced Spring, and the commencement of the astronomical year, under the sign of the ram, which was meant by the symbolical figure of the deity. The word Amoun, formed from Am-oueïn (*a*), resplendent, indicated the desired effects which

(*y*) Euseb. de Prep. Evangel. lib. 3.

(*z*) Lib. 1.

(*a*) Jabloniki, tom. 1.



the Sun produced when at the Equator ; as lengthened days, superiour light, and, particularly, the preface of inundation and plenty.

The priests were accustomed to associate Hercules in this worship. At the feast of Ammon, after covering the statue of Jupiter with the skin of the ram, they placed near this symbolical deity the idol of Hercules (*b*), which, in their language, they called *Dsom*, or *Dsiom* (*c*), strength, which characterised the power of the Sun when at the equinoctial. According to Plutarch (*d*), they also said Hercules, placed in the Sun, turned with it ; which has not escaped Macrobius (*e*). “ The very name of Hercules (*Ἡρακλῆς*) shews it meant the Sun. “ *Ἡρᾶς* signifies air, and *Κλῆς* splendor, “ for what is the splendor of the air but “ that illumination it receives from the Sun, “ by whose departure it is left in profound “ darkness ?” Hence the fanciful allegories

(*b*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*c*) Jablonski, tom. 1.

(*d*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*e*) Macrobius Saturnal. lib. 1.

of the Greeks which attest that the twelve labours of the Hero allude to the Sun passing the twelve signs of the Zodiack, during his annual revolution.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XXI.

OF HORUS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

*The hawk was a symbol of Horus, as well as of Osiris, to whom similar attributes were frequently ascribed; his throne supported by lions, because he represented the Sun at the Summer solstice: his education at Butis, on the banks of the grand lake, denoted his power in attracting vapours, which fell in dews on the earth; his victory over Typhon signified the good effects the Sun produced in Summer, as inundation, the expelling the South, and bringing the Etesian, winds.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**H**ORUS, a famous deity of ancient Egypt, was also, Sir, a type of the Sun. Plutarch affirms (*f*) the virtue resident in the Sun, while he moves through space, the Egyptians named Horus, and the Greeks Apollo. Three

(*f*) -Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

cities, named after this god (*g*), prove the veneration he was held in by the people (*b*). The hawk equally signifies Osiris and Horus, to which the same attributes were sometimes ascribed. In Hermapion's interpretation of the hieroglyphics engraved on the obelisk at Heliopolis, are these remarkable words. "Horus is Lord Supreme, and the Author of Time (*i*)," which are the principal attributes of Osiris, and, to appertain to Horus, it follows Horus signified the Sun, in certain signs: as we learn from the oracle of Apollo, at Claros. "Know that the first of the gods is Iao, called the Invisible in Winter, Jupiter in Spring (*k*), the Sun in Summer, and, toward the end of Autumn, the tender Iao." The Sun at the Summer solstice, then, by pre-eminence, called the Sun, is the same as Horus. The Egyptians depicted him borne by lions (*l*) because he

(*g*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

(*b*) Their Egyptian name was *Cities of Horus*. The Greeks called them *Cities of Apollo*.

(*i*) Ammianus Marcellinus.

(*k*) *i. e. Amsun*. Which various denominations will be explained in the sequel.

(*l*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

entered the sign of Leo. Those who presided over divine things placed sphinxes, then, at the entrance of canals, and sacred fountains, to inform the people of the approaching inundation. We learn from Macrobius why the Greeks called Horus Apollo, and he confirms this opinion. “ In their mysteries  
 “ they discovered, as an inviolable secret,  
 “ that the Sun, entering the superior hemis-  
 “ phere, is called Apollo (*m*).” These are concurring proofs that this emblematic deity only signified the Sun when in the Summer signs. This might lead to an interpretation of the sacred fable which the priests invented of Horus, for they continually enveloped their religion in mystery. Plutarch relates it at length (*n*): I shall only give an abstract. They affirmed he was the son of Isis and Osiris; that Typhon, having killed Osiris, his brother, seized the kingdom; but Horus, allying himself to Isis, revenged his father’s death, drove the tyrant from the throne, without taking his life, and reigned gloriously in Egypt. Whoever has travelled, but a little,

(*m*) Macrobi. Saturnal. lib. 1.

(*n*) De Iside et Osiride.

through this country, will observe physical phænomena, concealed under the veil of fable. The wind Khamfin often is very destructive in spring, raising vortices of scorching sands which suffocate travellers, cloud the air, and hide the face of the sun, so that the earth, sometimes, remains plunged in darkness. Here are the death of Osiris, and the reign of Typhon. These tempests usually happen in the months of February, March, and April; but are dissipated when the sun approaches Leo, because it changes the atmosphere, and brings the Etesian winds which dispel unwholesome vapours, and maintain coolness, and salubrity, under a fiery sky. This is the triumph of Horus over Typhon, and this his glorious reign. Naturalists, observing the influence of the moon on the atmosphere, allied her to the god to chase the usurper from the throne. Considering Osiris as father of time, the priests gave Horus, who reigned three months in the year, the title of his son. This I think to be the natural way of explaining the allegory. Men of learning must have understood a language familiar to them; the populace, only, who saw not beyond the

surface, could regard these allegoric personages as real gods, and decree them prayers and sacrifices. Jablonski (o), interpreting the epithet Arueri, which the Egyptians gave Horus, says it signified effective virtue; which expression perfectly characterizes the phænomena that happen during the reign of this god in Egypt, where the sun displays all his power, in summer, swelling the waters by the vapours he has attracted, that are driven among the Abyssinian mountains, and requiting the husbandman with the riches of agriculture. That they should honour him with the name of Arueri, to indicate these auspicious effects, was natural.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(o) Tom I.

## L E T T E R    XXII.

## O F T H E C E L E S T I A L S E R A P I S.

*Serapis adored under the Ptolemies, who built a stately temple in honour of him; though this deity was worshipped in Egypt before their reign, and originated on the banks of the Nile; was an emblem of the sun in autumn: named invisible because of the shortness of the day, in the north: was the Pluto of the Greeks, but divested of their poetical fables.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**T**HE Ptolemies bringing from Sinope, a city of Pontus, to Alexandria, the statue of a god, that arriving was called Serapis, propagated his worship throughout Egypt. The stately temple they built in his honour; which vied in grandeur with the capitol, the beauty of its ornaments, majestic architecture, festivals, and the pompous ceremonies they instituted, attracted the popular veneration



tion to this new deity.. Serapis, the god of the court, almost obliterated those of the ancient Egyptians. Provinces contended to build him temples, and burn incense on his altars; to which celebrity we must attribute the opinion of writers, who pretend his worship was here introduced by the Ptolemies, and, till then unknown; for various passages from better informed historians demonstrate the reverse. Plutarch (*p*) introduces a man who tells Alexander the Great, Serapis has appeared to me, broken my chains, and sent me to thee. The Athenians, having decreed the honors of Bacchus to this conqueror, Diogenes exclaimed, let me then be Serapis (*q*); which passages prove this deity was known before the Ptolemies. Authors inform us he originated on the banks of the Nile. Several temples of Serapis are seen in Egypt, says Pausanias (*r*). Alexandria possesses the most magnificent, the most ancient is at Memphis. Tacitus, whose testimony cannot be questioned, mentioning the god of

(*p*) Plut. in vita Alexand.

(*q*) Diog. Laert. in vita Diogenes.

(*r*) Pausanias in Atticis.

Sinope, transported to Alexandria, thus speaks (s): “ A temple, worthy the grandeur of the city, was built at Rachotis (t), where had been an ancient chapel consecrated to Serapis and Isis.” These authorities leave no doubt concerning the antiquity of the Egyptian Serapis, and we also learn from history he was, in some respects, the Greek Pluto, and one of the symbols of the sun. “ When the god of Sinope (u) was transported to Alexandria, the interpreter Timotheus, and Manetho Sebennythus conjectured, beholding the Cerberus and Dragon which adorned his statue, that it represented Pluto, and persuaded Ptolemy this god and Serapis were the same, though not so called in the country whence he had been brought. On his arrival, therefore, he was named Serapis, for thus the Egyptians call Pluto.” Yet we must not suppose the Egyptian Pluto, like the Gre-

(s) Tacit. Annal. lib. 4.

(t) A small place, inhabited by fishermen in the time of Alexander, but, afterward, a considerable suburb of Alexandria, where, at present, is a hill of rubbish, near a hundred feet high, under which the temple lies buried.

(u) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

cian, was the king of Hell, of ghosts, and judge of the dead ; this doctrine took birth in Greece, and was unknown at Memphis. Porphyry (x) tells us, “ The priests of  
 “ Egypt by Pluto understand the sun, near  
 “ the winter solstice, when, remaining under  
 “ the earth, he traversed and enlightened  
 “ an unknown world.” For this reason Callisthenes calls Serapis the invisible god of Sinope ; and Julian, speaking of Pluto, says, “ Plato affirms the sublime souls  
 “ of virtuous men are borne before this god,  
 “ whom we, also, name Serapis, because he  
 “ is invisible (y).”

They called him invisible because the sun, near the winter solstice, remains longer concealed, and seems in haste to hide himself from the northern nations ; and they depicted him under two different colours, now luminous, and now dark blue, to indicate his abode six months in the northern, and six in the southern, hemisphere (z). The first was called Amoun, sparkling, or

(x) Porphyr. apud Euseb. Prep. Evang. lib. 3.

(y) Julian. Orat. 4.

(z) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 1.

upper; the second Serapis, or lower. Such are the most probable opinions respecting this emblematical deity, to be gathered from the ancients and Jablonski: perhaps the ancient philosophers of Greece meant by Pluto the sun in winter, but the inventive poets made him the monarch of the infernal regions.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XXIII.

## OF HARPOCRATES.

*Harpocrates was a symbol of the sun at the winter solstice, in Egypt, and the god of silence in Greece. The priests figured him with his feet joined, so as scarcely to be able to walk, as an emblem of the slow, and almost insensible, motion of the sun at the tropic of Capricorn. They seated him on the flower of the lotus, because it blossoms at the end of autumn.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**M**ACROBIUS tells us the Egyptians took the semblance of the sun from the sanctuary, under the form of a child, to announce to the people the shortest day; which emblematic deity was called Harpocrates (a). The Greeks made him the god of silence;

(a)

because

because he was born with one of his fingers on his mouth. Isis was delivered of the tender Harpocrates at the winter solstice (*b*). This Egyptian name signifies lame (*c*), and he was depicted with this defect to indicate the slow, and almost insensible, motion of the sun at the tropic. The two feet of Harpocrates were joined so as to form but one, which the Egyptians meant as emblematic of the course of the sun, at the winter solstice (*d*). Plutarch adds, they depicted him seated on the flower of the lotus (*e*) : nor could they find a symbol more expressive ; for this stately lily of the north, as Herodotus calls it, blowed only at the end of autumn.

The priests who veiled the most striking phenomena of nature in fable, and thus formed an enigmatic theology, said Jupiter (Ammon), having his feet at first joined together, could not walk freely, and was so ashamed of the infirmity that he lived in solitude. Isis, sorry at his disaster, by separating, restored him the use of his legs. In

(*b*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*c*) Jablonski Pantheon Egyptiacum, tom. I.

(*d*) Horapoll. Hieroglyphica, lib. 2.

(*e*) Plut. de Iside & Osiride.

this allegory we perceive Harpocrates, or the sun, stationary at the winter solstice; and, after the operation of Isis, Ammon (the sun), advancing more rapidly, when arrived at the Equator.

The Egyptians were not the only people who expressed themselves by symbols; all ancient nations, especially in the infancy of language, were obliged to adopt the use of parables and allegories: before the invention of letters, objects were necessary to speak to the mind; and the metaphors so often employed in Hebrew and Arabic prove their antiquity. “The Paphlagonians said the  
“sun slept in winter, and waked in summer; and the Phrygians that he was en-  
“chained in winter, and walked free from  
“fetters in the spring (*f*).”

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*f*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

## L E T T E R XXIV.

## MENDES A SYMBOL OF THE SUN.

*Mendes probably the first emblem of the sun, signifying its productive virtue. The goat consecrated to him as the most prolific of animals. The priests initiated. The phallus, an emblem of generation, worn on their habits, and adorned the statues of their other deities: improperly named Pan by the Greeks.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE God I am going to speak of, Sir, was, apparently, the first symbol of the sun. The Egyptians, finding they were indebted to him for the richness of their country and inundation, that his beneficent beams, which gave health and life to all nature, made the plants sprout, and ripened the harvest, held the sun to be the first source of fertility, and adored him by the name of Mendes, which signifies



signifies most fruitful (*g*). That his productive power might plainly be denoted, they consecrated the goat to him, the living image of the god it represented, and fed it in the temple of Mendes. The people of the Mendesian province held festivals in its honour, wore mourning at its death, and paid it veneration so extraordinary that decency will not permit me to cite what Herodotus, Pindar, Plutarch, and others, have written. So much may superstition bewilder feeble humanity! The father of history (*b*), deceived by this adoration, supposed Mendes really signified a goat, and several of the Greek writers have adopted the error. Others have found and remarked that Mendes was the symbolic deity of fecundity; the goat its living emblem, and the sun the principle. Suidas asserts, “The Egyptians adore the goat because it is consecrated to generative virtue (*i*).” Diodorus (*k*) and Herapollo (*l*) are of the same opinion.

(*g*) Jabloniski, Pantheon Egyptiacum, tom. I

(*b*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*i*) Suidas sub voce Mendes.

(*k*) Diod. lib. 1.

(*l*) Hieroglyph. lib. 1.

The Greeks pictured Pan with horns, and the feet and tail of a goat, and supposed an analogy between him and the Egyptian god, wherefore they called Mendes Pan, and the city of Chemmis Panopolis, now Achmim, where Mendes had a temple. This resemblance was but apparent; Pan, the guardian of woods, caverns, and mountains, was a demi-god, while that of Egypt was in the number of the eight grand deities. “ Her-  
 “ cules, Bacchus, and Pan (*m*) have lately  
 “ been received in the temples of Greece.  
 “ Pan (i. e. Mendes) is the most ancient of  
 “ the eight grand gods of Egypt.”—“ The  
 “ Egyptians honour Pan (*n*) with a parti-  
 “ cular worship, his statue is in most of  
 “ their temples, and the priests who succeed  
 “ to the sacred office are first initiated into  
 “ his mysteries.”

These passages authorize us to suppose Mendes the first emblem of the sun, and this is but rational; for, before astronomers had imagined the tropics, the equator, and observed the various phænomena produced by

(*m*) Herodotus.

(*n*) Diod. Sic. lib. i.

the sun's revolution, the Egyptians must have remarked his productive virtue. Fully to depict it they created an emblematic deity and named him Mendes, most prolific, of which the goat was the image; for this reason Diodorus (o) declares Mendes and Osiris are the same; and, in fact, they both denoted the sun, but each meant different attributes. What gives this truth a farther degree of evidence is that the phallus, the symbol of generation, and, especially, of Mendes, adorned all the deities I have spoken of, and the sacerdotal habits of the priests.

I have enumerated the various denominations under which the sun was adored in ancient Egypt: by the famous name of Osiris they held him to be the author of time; Ammon marked his passage to the equator, announced spring and reviving light; Hercules denoted his benevolent power; the glorious reign of Horus meant the summer signs, and informed the people of the expulsion of the south winds, and the progress of the inundation; Serapis signified his return from the

(o) Lib. 1.

Equinoctial to the tropic of Cancer; Harpocrates the slowness of his course, when at the winter solstice; and, lastly, Mendes was the symbol of his generative virtue. From these attributes, thus personified, the priests formed a fabulous theology; which, the people, holding this sacred; were led to worship chimerical gods. I shall next speak of Isis and the correspondent deities: you will every where find the same system, and perceive the priests studying nature, astronomy, observing physical effects, and veiling their discoveries from the vulgar.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XXV.

## OF ISIS OR THE MOON.

*The Egyptians first adored the moon under her proper name Iah, which worship, brought to Greece, gave birth to the fable of Io. Observing her influence, they named her Isis, the cause of plenty, and attributed the inundation to the tears of the deity, i. e. the dew of which she was the reputed mother. The Copts still pretend the dew, during the solstice, ferments the waters, and makes them overflow.*

TO M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE Egyptians were unbounded in their veneration for the Moon; which, from the highest antiquity, they honoured as the queen of Heaven (*p*). They first adored her under her proper name of Iah (*q*). Inachus, the

(*p*) Jeremiah.

(*q*) Jablonſki, Pantheon Ægypt, tom. II.

first king of Argos, brought this worship into Greece, one hundred and twenty years before Moses (*r*). “The cow is there,” says Eustathius (*f*), “the symbol of Io, or “the Moon; for, in the Argive tongue, the “Moon is called Io.”——“The Greeks “now call the Moon Io, in a hidden and “mystical sense (*t*).” After the Grecian language had prevailed over the Egyptian, this forgotten name appeared mystical, and was only used within the temples, where they preserved the origin of ancient religions; therefore Malala calls it mystical.

. Attached to the observation of the phenomena of nature, the priests of Egypt, remarking the Moon had an immediate influence on the atmosphere, wind, and rain, held her, as well as the Sun, to be the source of the inundation, and, seeking a characteristic epithet, named her Isis, which, in Egyptian, signifies the cause of abundance (*u*). This happened three hundred and twenty years

(*r*) Jablonſki ubi ſupra.

(*f*) Comment. in Dionyf. Perieget.

(*t*) Chronolog. Johannis Malake.

(*u*) Jablonſki, Pantheon Aegyptiacum, tom. II.

after the departure of the Israelites, at which time they gave the Sun and Moon surnames proper to fix their discoveries, and present a new theology to the people. The origin of the Grecian fable must be attributed to this change, which makes Io cross the sea, metamorphosed into a cow, and conducts her to Egypt, where she receives the name of Isis. Lucian, perfectly instructed in ancient mythology, makes Jupiter speak thus. "Conduct Io to the banks of the Nile, "across the sea; let her become Isis, the "goddess of the Egyptians, augment the "waters of the river, and let loose the "winds." The most important event of the country being the increase of the Nile, on which the existence of the nation depended, they most carefully sought its cause. The priests, initiated in the mysteries, that is to say, instructed in the natural sense of allegories with which they amused vulgar credulity, knew all that related to the inundation, and the signs by which they might judge whether it would be more or less favourable. Their intimate connection with the Ethiopians had procured them most valuable information,

which they kept among themselves. “ The  
 “ heavy rains, which fall in Summer, swell  
 “ the Nile, as Aristotle and Eudoxus affirm,  
 “ who say they received this information  
 “ from the Egyptian priests (x).” They also  
 knew these rains were occasioned by the  
 north winds. “ The rains of Abyssinia are  
 “ attributed to the Etesian winds, which  
 “ drive the northern clouds thither (y).”  
 The learned were not ignorant of these merely  
 physical effects; but, that they might hold  
 the people in subjection, they involved them  
 in mystery, which they themselves only un-  
 derstood.

The vulture, the symbol of Isis, denoted  
 she had the power to engender, and let loose,  
 the winds. The Nile began to increase at  
 the new Moon after the solstice, wherefore,  
 the priests, holding this planet to be the mo-  
 ther of the winds, decreed her the honour (z).  
 “ Isis is the genius of the Nile (a). The  
 “ fistrum she holds in her right hand signified

(x) Eustath. in Odyss. IV.

(y) Pliny, lib. 5. Pomp. Mela, lib. 1.

(z) Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. 3.

(a) Servius in Æneid, lib. 8.



“ the increase and flooding of the waters,  
 “ the vase in her left their abundance in the  
 “ canals.” Temples were erected to her, in  
 various provinces, and she had every where  
 altars, and priests. Eustathius, the gram-  
 marian, says Cophtos is a city of the Thebais,  
 where Io is adored by the name of Isis; they  
 celebrate the increase of the Nile with the  
 sistrum in these festivals. The people, ac-  
 cording to the allegoric language of the  
 priests, think they owe this benefit to the  
 tears of the deity. According to Pausanias,  
 the Egyptians were persuaded the tears of  
 Isis augmented the Nile, and made it over-  
 flow the fields, of which superstition the  
 Copts are not yet cured; they still say a  
 dew falls at the solstice, which ferments the  
 water of the river, and produces the flood.  
 Is not this dew the tears of the goddess, so  
 famous among their forefathers? They in-  
 tended to establish an analogy between the  
 phænomena attending the course of the Moon  
 and those of the inundation. “ They say  
 “ the degrees of the elevation of the waters  
 “ answer to the phases of the Moon; that at  
 “ Elephantina they rise to twenty-eight cu-  
 “ bits.

“ bits, corresponding to the days of her  
 “ revolution ; that at Mendes, where the in-  
 “ crease is least, they approach seven cubits,  
 “ equal to the days of the first quarter ; and  
 “ that the mean point of the increase at  
 “ Memphis is fourteen cubits, corresponding  
 “ to the full Moon (*b*).” Here we see with  
 what attention they sought for causes which  
 had any relation to an event so interesting to  
 public felicity.

Having named the Moon Isis, or the cause  
 of abundance, the Egyptians bestowed this  
 epithet on the earth, as the mother of fruits.  
 Macrobius says, It is known that Osiris is  
 the Sun, and Isis (*c*) the Earth. “ Isis, in the  
 “ Egyptian tongue, denotes the Earth (*d*).”  
 Thus considered, she has great affinity with  
 the Ceres of the Greeks. Herodotus declares  
 her to be the same deity (*e*). But, not to  
 wander from the Egyptian theology, this  
 denomination must not be extended to the  
 globe in general. Plutarch, perfectly in-

(*b*) Plutarch de Iside et Osiride.

(*c*) Saturnalia, lib. 1.

(*d*) Servius in Æneid, lib. 8.

(*e*) Lib. 2.

formed, tells us the priests bestowed the name of Isis only on that part of Egypt which the Nile waters, alluding to its fecundity; and adds that, in sacred language, the inundation was called the marriage of Osiris with Isis.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    XXVI.

## O F   T H E   S T A R   S O T H I S.

*Some writers call Sothis Isis, but this star, called Sirius by the Greeks, and Canicula by the Latins, was only consecrated to that goddess. The Egyptians formed two periods, dated at the rising of this star. Their great veneration for it proceeded from their being able, at the time of its heliacal rising, to determine the height of the inundation; whence they named it the star which makes the waters increase.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**STRONOMERS, having observed the course of Sothis, and the relation it had to Isis and the inundation, proposed this star as an object of veneration, and consecrated it by religion. Its fame was such that several authors have called it Isis. “ Isis is also the  
“ name of a star; called Sothis, in Egyptian,  
“ and in Greek Astrocyon (*Ἀστροκύων*) (*f*).”—

(*f*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. I.

“ The

“ The Egyptians affirm Sothis and Isis are  
 “ the same (*g*).” Be these opinions as they  
 may, Sothis, certainly, was not Isis, but merely  
 the constellation of the dog, and, particularly,  
 the star Sirius. The Egyptians dated the  
 commencement of the civil year from his  
 rising. “ The star which the Greeks call  
 “ Sirius, and the dog star, the Egyptians  
 “ name Sothis. The constellation of Orion  
 “ and the dog are consecrated to Horus and  
 “ Isis (*h*).” Theon the astronomer supports  
 this opinion (*i*). “ Sirius rises about eleven  
 “ at night, at which time the Egyptian year  
 “ begins, and his rising has been consecrated  
 “ to Isis.”——“ Aquarius is not at Mem-  
 “ phis, as at Rome, the beginning of the  
 “ year, but Cancer, near which sign is  
 “ Sothis, which the Greeks call the dog.  
 “ The first day of the Egyptian month,  
 “ and, according to them, of the crea-  
 “ tion of the world, is the rising of this  
 “ star (*k*).”——“ Antiquity assigns the lion

(*g*) Damascius in vita Isidori.

(*h*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*i*) Theon. in Arati Phœnom.

(*k*) Porphyry, de Antro Nympharum.

“ and the crab to the Sun and Moon, because  
 “ they were under those signs at the crea-  
 “ tion (1).” These last words may be sup-  
 posed to mark the time when men, after  
 numerous observations on the motion of the  
 celestial bodies, formed their discoveries into  
 one doctrinal system, which they called  
 Astronomy, and dated the creation from that  
 epocha. Were this conjecture true it would  
 prove the Egyptians to be the most antient  
 of astronomers, for authors attribute to them  
 this allegoric language.

These citations, Sir, demonstrate Sothis  
 was not Isis, but consecrated to Isis. The  
 astronomers have two periods they called  
 Sothic, because they were dated at the rising  
 of this star. The first comprehended one  
 thousand four hundred and sixty-one years,  
 in which they principally considered the  
 course of the Sun, that, after this long revo-  
 lution, returned to the same position in the  
 heavens. The duration of the second was  
 twenty-five years, and related to the course  
 of the Sun and Moon. They had observed  
 that, after this space of time, the new Moons

(1) Macrobi. Somn. Scipionis

began on the same day of the year, without, however, being at the same point of the Zodiack. By this cycle, which included exactly three hundred and nine lunar revolutions, they regulated their festivals, for they paid great attention to the Neomeniæ.

This was the chief of the reasons which led them to consecrate the dog star to Isis. They supposed this deity to be the cause of the inundation; and, as they could judge by the rising of Sothis how high the waters would be, they dedicated this star to her. “The rising of the dog star announces, by certain signs, the events of the year (*m*).” This passage must be understood of the increase of the Nile, which was the most important phenomenon of Egypt. Diodorus Siculus (*n*) informs us the Egyptians called Sothis the star which made the waters increase.

Bochart and Kircher, who knew that the Greeks called Sothis, *Kuuv*, a dog, and the Latins Canicula, have pretended this word had the same signification in Egyptian; but

(*m*) Horapoll. Hieroglyph. lib. i.

(*n*) Lib. i.

Jablonski (*o*) has perfectly proved this erroneous, and that the name comes from *Sotb-Ois*, the beginning of time. Nor could they better describe a star at the rising of which they dated their civil year, and, allegorically, the creation.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*o*) *Pantheon Ægyptiacum*, tom. II.



## L E T T E R XXVII.

OF BUBASTIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

*Bubastis highly honoured in Egypt. A city bore her name: aided pregnant women, and, therefore, called Diana, and Ilithyia, by the Greeks and Latins: represented the new moon: had festivals on the third day of the month, because the crescent then became visible.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Caire

THE Egyptians, Sir, gave different names to the sun, either to characterise its effects, or relations to the earth: they followed the same method with the moon. Choeremon, a sacred writer of Egypt, puts this beyond doubt (*p*): “ All that has been asserted of  
“ Osiris and Isis, each religious fable signifies the phases of the moon, and the  
“ course of the sun.”

(*p*) Vide Porphyrii Epist. ad Anebo.

Bubastis

Bubastis was the principal attribute of Isis, which theology personified, and made a deity, in honour of whom a city was built, bearing her name, and a temple (*q*), where, at a certain season of the year, the people from all parts of Egypt assembled. The symbol of this goddess was a cat, fed with consecrated food by the priests, embalmed at its death, and borne with funeral pomp to its destined tomb. The ancients have explained this worship in various ways, all little probable, in my opinion, and which I shall not recite. The Greeks say, when Typhon declared war on the gods, Apollo changed himself to the vulture, Mercury to the ibis, and Bubastis to the cat, and that the people's veneration for the latter originated in this fable; but they borrowed their ideas from the Egyptians, who thought very differently. Be this as it may, the cat was highly honoured in Egypt, and a Roman soldier, imprudently killing one, was instantly stoned by the populace.

In the language of the priests, Bubastis was the daughter of Isis, and, in certain

(*q*) Herod. lib. 2:

cases, her representative; hence the Greeks, who worshipped the moon under the name of Diana, bestowed this name on the Egyptian deity (*r*). The Egyptians attributed to her the virtue of succouring pregnant women. Nicarchus (*s*) proves this when, speaking of a lady who, without invoking her, had been safely delivered, he says, “ Thus the function of Bubastis has been  
 “ rendered useless! Should women be brought  
 “ to bed like Philænium, what must be-  
 “ come of the goddesses?”

The Greeks and Latins, disciples of the Egyptians, ascribed the same power to Diana, whom Horace thought worthy of the following lines (*t*) :

Montium custos nemorumque virgo,  
 Que laborantes utero puellas  
 Ter vocata audis, adimisque letho,  
 Diva triformis.

Philosophers will seek the origin of this worship in the laws nature has imposed on women, which, in some sort, accord with

(*r*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*s*) Anthologia, lib. 1.

(*t*) Hor. lib. III. ode xxii.

lunar revolutions, though, with the poets, they have concealed them in allegories.

Not that there is a perfect resemblance between the two deities: The Diana of the Greeks was the goddess of the woods and the chase; not so the Bubastis of the Egyptians. The first was the daughter of Jupiter and Latona; the latter of Osiris and Isis.

A barbarous custom was introduced in the festivals, held in honour of Bubastis, whom the Greeks also called Ilithyia, or Lucina, to signify her influence on child-bearing. Under this name the Egyptians adored her, in the city of Ilithyia, near Latopolis (*u*). “ In  
“ this city (*x*) men, called Typhons, were  
“ burned alive, as Manetho affirms, and their  
“ ashes were scattered to the winds.”——  
“ Amosis (*y*) abolished these sanguinary sa-  
“ crifices, substituting wax figures, as large  
“ as life.” Herodotus (*z*) positively main-  
tains the Egyptians were never guilty of this

(*u*) Strabo, lib. 17, mentions this city, no remains of which are now to be found.

(*x*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*y*) Porphyry. de Abstinencia.

(*z*) Lib. 2. The Egyptian say this historian only sacrificed hogs, calves, oxen, and geese.

crime. "How," exclaims he, "could a  
 " people who reluctantly were brought to  
 " immolate a few animals, shed human blood  
 " on the altars of the gods?" Testimonies  
 being very positive on both sides, it may be  
 supposed the Arab pastors, who subjugated  
 Egypt, long before the coming of the Israel-  
 ites, introduced a barbarous custom, estab-  
 lished among themselves from the remotest  
 antiquity (*a*). This opinion gains probability  
 from the Egyptians ceasing to shed human  
 blood, when Amosis had taken Heliópolis  
 from these ferocious conquerors, and driven  
 them toward the frontiers of Arabia.

The question, here, naturally occurs, how  
 might Bubastis be called the daughter of  
 Isis, being equally the symbol of the Moon?  
 Egyptian theology easily explains these seeming  
 contradictions. Isis was the general name

(*a*) "The Dumatenian Arabs annually killed a child,  
 " and buried it under the altar, using its corpse as a divine  
 " idol." *Porphy. de Abstinentiâ, lib. 2.* I might bring  
 many other citations to prove the Arabs had human sacri-  
 fices. Mahomet, strongly reprehending this abominable  
 custom, has eradicated it from among them. Throughout  
 the earth we find, with astonishment, examining the origin  
 of nations, there are none who have not offered men in  
 sacrifice to the Gods.

of

of the Moon; Bubastis one of its attributes. Sol in conjunction with Luna was the celestial marriage of Osiris with Isis; and the crescent, which three days after appeared, was, allegorically, their daughter. In this sense the Hebrews called the same appearance the birth of the Moon; and thus Horace (*b*):

*Cœlo supinas si tuleris manus  
Nascente Lunâ, Rustica Phidyle; &c.*

Hence we learn why, in the city of Ilithyia, where Bubastis was adored, there was a particular ceremony on the third day of the lunar month (*c*). The Egyptians then kept a solemn festival, in honour of Bubastis, which, in their language, signified New Moon (*d*). The crescent on her head visibly expressed the meaning of the priests when they formed this symbolical deity.

(*b*) Hor. lib. III. ode 23.

(*c*) Euseb. Prep. Evan. lib. 3.

(*d*) Jablonski Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

## L E T T E R XXVIII.

OF BUTIS, A SYMBOL OF THE FULL  
MOON.

*This deity, the Latona of the Greeks, had a famous temple, in the city of Butis, and a sanctuary made from one enormous block of granite. Uttered cracks: her temple said to be in a rocking island. Being most abundant at the Full Moon, she was thought to have caused the dew. Said to have educated Horus, and saved him from the fangs of Typhon.*

To M. L. M.

Charmes.

**T**HE Egyptians, also, revered an emblematic deity, named Buto, or Butis, which, in certain respects, was the same with Isis; and built the city Butis, on that branch of the Nile which, running near Sebennytis, now Semennoud, discharges itself into Lake Bourlos. Here she was adored, in a magnificent temple, which I have described, from Herodotus, in Letter XXII. Vol. I. The  
Sanctuary

sanctuary was a single block of granite, a cube, each side of which was sixty feet, and the largest and heaviest stone known to history (*e*). The oracle of Butis became so famous that the Egyptians came to consult it from all parts. In the Grecian mythology, which is derived from sacerdotal fables, this deity is called Latona (*f*); the Egyptians pretend she had nurtured Horus and Bubastis, and that her temple was built on a floating island. The Greeks, imitating their masters, say Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana, had taken refuge in Delos, which floated as impelled by the winds.—Notwithstanding the question of Herodorus,

(*e*) The block from which this sanctuary was cut had but five sides, the ceiling being formed of another stone. These sides were 60 feet square, and six in thickness, so that it must have contained 91584 cubic feet, and this number multiplied into 184 pounds, the weight of a cubic foot of granite, gives 16,851,456 pounds, from which, if we deduct 851,456 pounds for the entrance, the dimensions of which the historian has not preserved, there will remain 16,000,000 pounds for the whole weight of this enormous mass, the most stupendous ever moved by human powers. *See the Preface.*

(*f*) Herod. lib. 2.



how might an island move and swim (*g*)? they adopted the Egyptian allegory in their theology; the poets embellished it, and the people, incapable of understanding the true meaning, worshipped a chimæra.

Let us examine, for this is the true object of enquiry, what the priests meant. The phænomena of nature was their peculiar study, which they uninterruptedly pursued under a climate much less variable than that of Europe. They learned to foresee, from the observations of ages, preserved in the sacred archives, what must happen at stated seasons (*b*). They had remarked that dew was not abundant at the New Moon, but exceedingly so at the full: they supposed the Moon greatly to influence the atmosphere, to attract vapours from lakes and rivers, and return them in dew; they, therefore, made the Full Moon a deity, which they named Butis. Agreeable to their principles, her abode was beside the grand lake, that she might more easily quench her thirst; which

(*g*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*b*) A nation who had a period of 1461 years must, for many ages, have observed the heavens and phænomena of

doctrine, come from Egypt, or where it will, or whether or not supposed by Philosophers to be well founded, has been adopted by many of the ancients and moderns.

“ The stoics say the Sun heats the waters  
 “ of the sea with his rays, and the Moon  
 “ attracts the mild humidity of lakes and  
 “ fountains (*i*).” Pliny says (*k*), “ Soft  
 “ waters are the element of the Moon, and  
 “ salt that of the Sun.”—“ At the full of  
 “ the Moon (*l*), the air dissolves in rain;  
 “ or, if the sky is serene, distills abundant  
 “ dews, which occasioned the lyric poet,  
 “ Alcman, to call the dew the son of the  
 “ Air and the Moon.” Among modern  
 Naturalists, M. Mile (*m*) has adopted this  
 opinion. “ In a fine day, and, especially,  
 “ in Spring, a cold and subtle vapour is  
 “ attracted by the Moon, into the middle  
 “ region of the air; whence, soon con-  
 “ densed to imperceptible drops, it falls to  
 “ the ground, in abundant dews, and yields  
 “ the necessary nutriment to plants.”

(*i*) Plutarch.

(*k*) Lib. 2.

(*l*) Macrob. Saturnal. lib. 7.

(*m*) Hist. Nat. tom. 2.

I do not cite these, Sir, as indubitable authorities. No one can deny the Moon greatly to influence the atmosphere; but, I believe, it would be difficult to prove it attracts water. This is the property of the Sun, which, by expanding humid particles, renders them lighter than the air, through which they rise, till they find an equilibrium. But were the ancients ignorant of this attraction, or do not the cited passages tend to prove they were not, and that they knew it was greater when the Sun and Moon were in opposition? Whether or not, the Egyptians, living in a hot climate, seldom refreshed by the salutary rains common to others, and which would be uninhabitable did not night dews (*n*) give life to vegetables, carefully observed how they were produced; and, perceiving them heaviest at the Full Moon, created a presiding deity. “Dew  
“ falls most abundantly at the full of the  
“ Moon (*o*).”——“In Egypt, Bactria, and

(*n*) They are so abundant, especially in Summer, that the earth is deeply soaked, and, in the morning, it might be supposed to have rained during night.

(*o*) Plutarch.

“ at Babylon, where it seldom rains, plants  
 “ are fed by dews (*p*).” For this reason the  
 Scripture often promised the Israelites, who  
 inhabited a climate much like that of Egypt,  
 dew, as a signal favour; and foretold its  
 want, as a chastisement.

The Egyptians were attentive observers,  
 and divided the time (*q*) between the New  
 and Full Moon into three equal parts. The  
 first was called the imperfect gift; and the  
 third, from the 11th to the 15th, was dig-  
 nified with the title of the perfect gift; be-  
 cause the dews then fell abundantly. The  
 name of Butis, a symbolical deity, precisely  
 marked what they supposed the cause; for it  
 signifies the planet that attracts humidity,  
 or the mother of dew (*r*). Here we discover  
 the genius of the priests; ever concealing  
 natural effects under allegory. The following  
 is the fable they invented (*s*): “ The Eryp-  
 “ tians say that Latona (Butis) one of their  
 “ eight great deities, inhabiting the city of  
 “ Butis, where her oracle is, received Horus

(*p*) Theophrast. Hist. Plantarum.

(*q*) Proclus. Comment. in Timæum.

(*r*) Jablonski Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

(*s*) Herodotus, lib. 2.

“ in charge from Isis, and hid him in a  
“ floating island, preserving him from the  
“ attempts of Typhon, who came here in  
“ search of the son of Osiris ; for they pre-  
“ tend that Horus, or Apollo, and Bubastis,  
“ whom we call Diana, were the children  
“ of Osiris and Isis.”

I have spoken, Sir, of the destructive south winds, which raise vortices of scorching dust, and suffocate man and beast in the deserts. One of their most pernicious effects is absolutely to prevent the falling of the dews, so necessary to vegetation in Egypt. Here is the tyrant Typhon, searching the son of Osiris, to put him to death ; but Isis confides him to Butis, whose abode is amidst the waters. That is to say, the exhalations of the Sun, and the influence of the Moon on the atmosphere, preventing those ills the Khamfin would cause, bestow the salutary dews which renovate nature. This I believe to be the natural interpretation of the sacerdotal fable.

I have the honor to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XXIX.

THE NILE, AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GOD.

*The Nile deified ; had cities, built in his honour, priests, festivals, and sacrifices. His first name Yaro, river ; but, after observing the phenomena of his inundation, they called him Neilon : i. e. increases at a certain season. A banquet publicly prepared for him, at the Summer solstice ; without which ceremony the people believed he would not overflow his banks.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

I HAVE described the Nile, Sir, as the river to which Egypt owes its fertility and wealth. I must now depict it as the deity to whom superstition erected altars. You are aware of its importance ; since, were it not for its fruitful waters, the country would be a desert. These high advantages are indicated by the veneration of the people, which became folly. “ No god is more solemnly worshipped  
? “ than

“ than the Nile (*t*).” The Egyptians are not the sole people who have deified rivers (*u*). The ancient Greeks and Indians granted them divine honours ; but the Egyptian priests surpassed them in pompous ceremonies. They even seemed only to adore Osiris and Isis because of their relation to the Nile, and influence over his waters. They first called him *Yaro* (*x*), which general denomination was long preserved ; and, perhaps, there was no other in Homer’s time, since this geographical poet simply calls it the river of Egypt. Having observed, for ages, the phenomena of its increase, they bestowed the epithet Neilon (*y*). This characteristic expression, adopted by all nations, obliterated the ancient name. Hesiod employs it first, whence we may conjecture he was posterior to Homer. “ Thetis “ has produced great rivers from the ocean ; the “ Nile, the Alpheus, and the Eridanus (*z*).”

(*t*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*u*) Maximus Tyrius.

(*x*) נַחַר Genesis, chap. 41. This word in the Coptic signifies river. Jablon. Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

(*y*) Derived from the Egyptian Nei Alei, which increases at a certain season : hence the Greek Νεῖλος ; and the Latin Nilus. Jablonki ubi. sup.

(*z*) Hesiod. Theogon.

The Ethiopians and Egyptians called it by different names. “ The river, which, in its  
 “ long windings, waters the lands of Ethi-  
 “ opia, is called Siris; but the moment its  
 “ azure stream reaches Syene, it is then the  
 “ Nile (*a*).”——“ The rivulets which form  
 “ this great river, gush from the mountains  
 “ lying on the east of Libya. The Ethio-  
 “ pians name it Siris, and the people of Syene  
 “ the Nile (*b*).” The Egyptians thought  
 they could not sufficiently display their grati-  
 tude for the river to which they owed their  
 existence. The pompous titles of father (*c*),  
 preserver of the country, and the terrestrial  
 Osiris, were given it: the gods were feigned  
 to have been born on its banks (*d*), which  
 must be understood allegorically; Nicopolis  
 (*e*) was founded in its honour, and a stately  
 temple erected to it there. From Herodotus  
 we learn (*f*) that priests were consecrated to

(*a*) Dionys. Perieget.

(*b*) Priscian——This is confirmed by Solinus and Pliny  
 lib. 5.

(*c*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*d*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*e*) Vide Stephanum Byzantinum.

(*f*) Lib. 2.



the Nile, in the cities ; whose principal occupation was to embalm bodies, killed by the crocodiles, or drowned in its waters. “ There  
 “ was a temple, remarkably grand, in a town  
 “ of Egypt, where was a wooden statue, famous for being adored by the people, and  
 “ carried by the impious priests from town to  
 “ town, in honour of the Nile (*g*).”——  
 “ The Nile gives fruitfulness to this country,  
 “ and the god is invited, with holy ceremonies, to a splendid feast, annually prepared  
 “ for him, that he may overflow the land :  
 “ should the priests fail in observing this ceremony, at the proper time, he would cease  
 “ to fertilize the plains of Egypt” (*h*.)

The priests evidently imposed on vulgar credulity, and instituted a superstitious worship, the inefficacy of which they knew, that they might become mediators between heaven and earth, and the supposed dispensers of plenty. The enigmatic theology they had framed, and which the hieroglyphics concealed from the people, admirably served their purpose, and they employed all their know-

(*g*) Palladius. cap. 57.

(*h*) Libanius Orat. pro Templis

ledge to render it respectable ; which observation is applicable to many nations.

The grand festival of the Nile was at the Summer solstice, when the inundation begins. “ This is the most solemn and celebrated festival of the Egyptians, who pay their river divine honours, and revere him as the first of their deities, proclaiming him the rival of Heaven, since, without the aid of clouds and rain, he waters the lands (*i*).” The type of his increase was a Nilometer ; which, when it began, the priests took, from the temple of Serapis, and bore, in pomp, through the towns, and cities. This is the wooden statue that excites the anger of Palladius. When the waters fell they replaced it in the sanctuary. They had, likewise, another emblem of the inundation, sculptured in stone, dedicated to the god of the Nile. Pliny, (*k*) speaking of the Basaltes, says, “ The greatest known is that sent to the Temple of Peace, by the Emperor Vespasian ; it represents the Nile, with sixteen children playing round him, intimating the number

(*i*) Heliodorus, Lib. 9.

(*k*) Lib. 36.

“ of cubits to which his waters rise.” Such, Sir, are the religious opinions of the ancient Egyptians, concerning the Nile; and such the festivals superstition held in its honor, which are not yet wholly abolished: their memory is preserved in the pomp with which the canal of Grand Cairo is annually opened.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    X X X.

## O F   A P I S,   T H E   S A C R E D   O X.

*The fame of Apis: princes and kings came to offer him sacrifice: his distinctive marks: Inauguration: The place where he was kept, and the temple to which carried at his death. The celebration of the birth of the new Apis: was the allegorical god of the solar year, the type of the cycle of twenty-five years, and the symbol of inundation.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**PIS, become famous in Egypt, was renowned among neighbouring nations. Pomponius Mela (*l*), Ælian (*m*), and Lucian, who speak after the priests, inform us he was generally worshipped in the country, and his divinity proved by evident marks. Alexander,

(*l*) Lib. I.

(*m*) Lib. II.

having conquered the kingdom, disdained not to offer him sacrifice (*n*). Titus (*a*), Adrian (*p*), and Germanicus (*q*), went to visit and pay him homage. These great princes, doubtless, knew the absurdity of such adoration; but curiosity induced them to learn the mysteries of the priests, and the desire of gaining the love of the Egyptians led them to offer incense to their idol. The best and most authentic writers, on Egyptian mythology, say, Apis was a symbolical deity. “Among their consecrated animals Mnevis  
“and Apis are the most famous; the first an  
“emblem of the sun, the second of the moon  
“(*r*).” Porphyrius (*s*), tells us Apis bore characteristic signs of both those luminaries; and Macrobius (*t*), confirming this opinion, adds, he was equally consecrated to them. You may well suppose, Sir, an ox become the object of public adoration, was not produced like other animals; the priests affirmed

(*n*) Arrian. *Exped. Alexand.*

(*a*) Sueton. in *Vita Tit.*

(*p*) Spartian. in *Vita Adriani.*

(*q*) Tacit. *Annal.* lib. 2.

(*r*) Amman. *Marcellin.* lib. 22.

(*s*) Apud Euseb. de *Præp. Evan.* lib. 3.

(*t*) *Saturnal.*

his origin was divine. Apis is seldom generated, nor ever according to the usual laws of nature. The Egyptians affirm it is by celestial fire (*u*). Plutarch explains this passage. “ The priests pretend the Moon sheds a generative light, with which should a cow, wanting the bull, be struck she conceives Apis, and he bears the signs of that planet (*x*).” Herodotus in Euterpe says the same. Such were the fables the priests taught, and the vulgar, to whom this god was the presage of Plenty, eagerly received, and blindly believed them. Pliny has described the marks of the sacred ox. “ A white spot, like a crescent, on the right side, and a swelling under the tongue, distinguished Apis (*y*).” When the cow, supposed to be impregnated by lunar rays, brought forth, the priests went to examine the calf, and, if thus marked, they proclaimed the birth of Apis and fertility. “ An edifice was built for the new god, facing the rising sun, according to the precepts of Hermes, where he was fed, four months, with milk ; after which the priests went in

(*u*) Pomp. Mela, lib. 1.

(*x*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*y*) Plin. lib. 8. Confirmed by Ælian, lib. 12.

“ pomp to his abode, and saluted him by the  
 “ name of Apis (*z*).” They then placed  
 him in a vessel, magnificently ornamented,  
 covered with a rich carpet, and sparkling with  
 gold, and conducted him to Nilopolis; sing-  
 ing hymns and burning incense. Here they  
 kept him forty days (*a*), during which wo-  
 men, only, had permission to see and salute  
 him in a manner I shall not relate, but which  
 is proved from good authority: while he  
 lived they were no more admitted into his  
 presence. Having been inaugurated, in this  
 city, the same procession, with innumerable  
 boats, took the god to Memphis (*b*), where,  
 all ceremonies ending, he became wholly sa-  
 cred (*c*). Apis had a stately dwelling, and  
 the place where he lay was mystically called  
*the bed*\*. Strabo (*d*) visited, and thus de-  
 scribed his palace. “ The edifice where  
 “ Apis remains is near the temple of Vulcan.  
 “ He is fed in a holy apartment, before  
 “ which is a grand court. The cow, his

(*z*) Ælian. Hist. Animal. lib. 11.

(*a*) Diod. Sic. lib. 2. — Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. 3.

(*b*) Ammian. Marcellin.

(*c*) Ammian. lib. 8.

\* The Latin reads *thalamus*, chamber, T.

(*d*) Lib. 17.

“ dam, is kept in a house on one of its sides ;  
 “ and, sometimes, to gratify the curiosity of  
 “ strangers, he is brought out, into this  
 “ court. He may always be seen through a  
 “ window ; but the priests also show him to  
 “ the public.” Solinus says they once a year  
 present him a heifer, which they put to death  
 on the same day.

An ox, thus marvellously procreated, necessarily had supernatural knowledge. Thus the priests affirmed he foretold the future, by his gestures, motions, and other modes, which they interpreted according to their fancies. “ Apis has two temples, called beds,  
 “ (*thalamos*) which serve as oracles to the  
 “ people. If, when consulted, he enters  
 “ the one, the prediction is favourable ; and  
 “ the reverse, if the other. He gives answers  
 “ to individuals, by taking food from their  
 “ hands ; this he refused from the hand of  
 “ Germanicus, who died soon after (*e*).” It were unjust to imagine this respectable writer had faith in such predictions ; he gives the opinions of the Egyptians, and only cites facts, without speaking his own sentiments.

(*e*) Plin. lib. 8.



We also learn (*f*) that, during the abode of Eudoxus the Astronomer in Egypt, Apis seemed to lick the hem of his garment, and the priests foretold he would become famous, but that his career would be short. Various historians relate that children, playing round the sacred ox, suddenly felt themselves inspired, foresaw the future, and unveiled its events. Thus powerful is superstition over the mind of man, who, yet, is vain of his penetration.

I have spoken of the installation of Apis. His birth is annually celebrated, for the space of a week (*g*). The people assemble to offer him sacrifices, and, what may seem surprising, they immolate oxen (*h*). This solemnity passes not without a miracle. Ammianus Marcellinus, who collected the opinions of the ancients, says, during the seven days when the priests celebrated the birth of Apis, crocodiles, forgetting their natural ferocity, became tame, and did harm to no one (*i*).

(*f*) Diog. Laer. lib. 7.

(*g*) Nicetas.

(*h*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*i*) Lib. 22 Solinus too cites this opinion.

Yet could not this ox, so honoured, pass the miraculous term affixed to his days. “ Apis cannot live more than a certain number of years ; which ended, they drown him in the fountain of the priests (*k*).” Ammianus Marcellinus adds, he is not permitted to live beyond the period which the sacred books prescribe ; and, when this happens, they embalm, and, secretly, entomb him, in caverns destined for that purpose. The priests, in this case, proclaim he has disappeared ; but, when he dies, naturally, before this epocha, they publish his death, and solemnly bear his body to the temple of Serapis. “ There was an ancient temple of Serapis, at Memphis, which strangers were forbidden to approach ; the priests themselves only entering when they entombed Apis (*l*).” — “ At this time, they opened the gates called Lethe and Cocytus (or forgetfulness and lamentation) which gave a loud and grating sound (*m*).”

(*k*) Plin. lib. 8.

(*l*) Pausanias.

(*m*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride. These gates were those of the temple of Serapis.

Ammianus Marcellinus and Solinus describe, with energy, the universal affliction of the Egyptians, who called on Heaven, with cries and groans, for another Apis. Lucian represents it very pleasantly. “ Is  
 “ there any one, when Apis dies, sufficiently  
 “ enamoured of his long hair not immedi-  
 “ ately to cut it off, and impress tokens of  
 “ his grief on his shaved pate ?”

It is important to know the term prescribed to the days of Apis, because it will shew the intention of the priests in establishing this symbolical deity ; and Plutarch, here, affords us some information. “ The  
 “ number five, multiplied by itself, is equal  
 “ to the letters of the Egyptian alphabet,  
 “ and the years of Apis (*n*).” You know, Sir, the number twenty five indicated a period of the Sun and Moon, to which this ox was consecrated. Syncellus, in his Chronographia, speaking of the thirty-second Egyptian king, named Aseth, says, “ The solar year  
 “ contained only 360 days, before Aseth,  
 “ who added five to make it compleat. In  
 “ his reign, a calf was raised to the rank of

(*n*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

“ the gods, and named Apis”. The following passage yields us still farther intelligence. “ It was customary to inaugurate the Kings of Egypt, at Memphis, in the temple of Apis, where they were first initiated in the mysteries, and received the religious garb, after which they were permitted to bear the yoke of the deity, through the town, to a place named the Sanctuary, which the profane were forbidden to enter. There they were obliged to swear they would add neither month nor day to the year, but that it should consist of 365 days, according to ancient establishment (o).”

This will authorise us to suppose Apis a tutelary deity of the new form given to the solar year, and of the cycle of twenty five years, discovered at the same time ; nor may we doubt but that Apis intimately referred to the increase of the Nile, it being attested by many historians. The period of this increase was the new moon after the Summer solstice, on which all eyes were fixed. Pliny says (p), Apis had a white mark, on the

(o) Fabricius Biblioth. Lat.

(p) Lib. 8.

right side, in the form of a crescent; which mark, adds Ælian (*q*), signified the commencement of the inundation; which authorities are confirmed by Ammianus Marcellinus. If Apis possessed these characteristic signs, which proved his origin divine, fertility and abundance were promised. It, therefore, seems evident this sacred ox, the guardian of the solar year, was also held to be the presiding genius of the inundation. The priests, by limiting his life to twenty five years, and making the installation of the new Apis concur with the renewal of this period, probably, had perceived, from long meteorological observations, this revolution continually brought years of abundance: no means could be more certain of obtaining respect from the people, toward this emblematic deity, since his birth promised a fortunate inundation, and all the treasures of fecundity.

The solemnity of his inauguration was called *apparition*. That which was annually renewed, about the twelfth or thirteenth of the month Payn, corresponding to the seventeenth or eighteenth of June, was named the

(*q*) Hist. Animal. lib. II.

birth of Apis, a festival which Ælian thus describes. “What banquetting, what sacrifices, does the commencement of the inundation occasion in Egypt! The people all celebrate the birth of Apis. To describe the dances, rejoicing, shews, and feasts, among the Egyptians, at this time, would be tedious; and to express the intoxication of joy, throughout every city, impossible (r).”

The name of this revered ox may add farther light to these remarks. *Api*, in Egyptian, signifies *number (s) measure*, which epithet is peculiarly characteristic of an animal designed to guard the solar year, to be the type of the cycle of twenty-five years, and the presage of a favorable inundation (t).

I have the honour to be, &c.

## LETTER

(r) Ælian. Hist. Animal.

(s) Jablonfki Panth. Egypt. tom. II.

(t) The Bishop of Avranches, M. Huot, has endeavoured to prove Apis was a symbol of the patriarch Joseph, which opinion he has supported with all his erudition.

Seduced

## L E T T E R XXXI.

## OF MNEVIS AND ONUPHIS.

*Mnevis and Onuphis sacred bulls. The first worshipped from antiquity too remote for the origin of this worship to be discovered; the second, kept in the Temple of Apollo, at Hermunthis, was not very famous, if we may judge from the silence of historians; the celebrity of Apis occasioned them both to be forgotten.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**M**NEVIS and Onuphis were two bulls consecrated to the Sun; the first was the tutelar deity of Heliopolis: the second, kept in the temple of Apollo at Hermunthis, the

Seduced by authority so great, some authors have adopted this system, which I have not thought necessary, seriously, to oppose, it being self destructive, and only proving how far prejudice may lead the most learned man astray, who is not guided by sound reason, and an impartial judgment.

modern

modern Armant, related to the increase of the Nile. “ At the city of Heliopolis (*u*),  
 “ built on an artificial mount, was the  
 “ temple of the Sun, where Mnevis was  
 “ kept, in a sacred inclosure, and held by  
 “ the citizens to be a god.” The ancients concur in confirming this bull was consecrated to the Sun (*x*); though the time of this consecration is too remote to be known, being much more antient than that of Apis. M. de Vignoles (*y*) places it under Menes, the first of the Pharaohs; but this opinion, unsupported by history, must be regarded as conjecture. We have a right to suppose, however, it preceded the departure of the Israelites, who, accustomed to Egyptian idolatry, cast a golden calf, in the desert, to serve them as a guide. The worship of Mnevis declined when Apis, consecrated to more important events, became the general deity; and Macrobius (*z*) informs us Mnevis held only the second rank among the sacred

(*u*) Strabo, lib. 17.

(*x*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1. Ælian Hist. Animal. lib. 11.  
 Porphyry apud Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. 3.

(*y*) Chronologie, tom. II.

(*z*) Saturn. lib. 1.



bulls; nor was any thing remarkable related of him, according to Ammianus Marcellinus (*a*).

We learn from Strabo (*b*), that Cambyfes, the scourge of Egypt, destroyed the ftately temple of Heliopolis; after which, we may fuppose, the worship of Mnevis fell to decay. Jablonfki interprets his name to fignify dedicated to the Sun (*c*). At Hermunthis, where there was a Nilometer, a bull was worshipped; called Onuphis (*d*), the good genius, becaufe he was honoured as the type of abundance. The priests kept him in the magnificent temple of Apollo, which I have defcribed, in the fifth Letter of vol. II. At the farther end of one of the apartments are ftill to be feen two marble oxen, furrounded by women fuckling their children. Here, no doubt, they celebrated, in his honor, the customary feftivals, at the birth of Apis; but this city was lefs confiderable than Memphis, which became the Metropolis, after the Kings of Thebes had thither transported the feat of

(*a*) Lib. 22.

(*b*) Lib. 17.

(*c*) Tom. II. Deriving it from *Mneisin*.

(*d*) Jablon. Parth. Egypt. tom. II.

empire. Onuphis was not so famous as Apis : this is the reason why he is not mentioned by the antients, except Strabo, Macrobius, and Ælian (*e*). Such, Sir, were the bulls the priests consecrated to preserve the memory of their discoveries, and which the vulgar adored as deities. The Egyptians, from the remotest ages, consecrated the ox, as the symbol of fruitfulness ; in which they were imitated by the Greeks. In after times, the horn, only, of that animal was depicted, filled with ears of corn, and fruits ; and the cornucopia became emblematically famous among the poets. Thus have most ancient customs originated in Egypt.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*r*) Ælian Hist. Animal. lib. 12.

## L E T T E R XXXII.

## OF THE TERRESTRIAL SERAPIS.

*The terrestrial Serapis was a deity which, the Egyptians supposed, presided over the increase of the waters. The Nilometer, divided into cubits, was his type, and a festival was held in his honour, when the inundation began. The priests took the Nilometer from the sanctuary, at the increase of the waters, and there, again, inclosed it, at the decrease, which they named Sari Api, the column of measure. This was the origin of the emblematical deity the Greeks called Serapis.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**T**HE Egyptians, Sir, had two deities named Serapis; the one celestial, of which I have spoken, the other terrestrial, of which I shall now speak. The first signified the Sun, in Autumn; the second related to the inundation.

inundation. “ The people of Egypt measure  
 “ the increase of the Nile by cubits (*f*).”—  
 “ Some authors affirm Serapis and Jupiter  
 “ are the same; others that he represents  
 “ the Nile, because he bears a bushel and a  
 “ cubit in his hand, emblems of the inunda-  
 “ tion (*g*).” These different opinions were  
 both right. The celestial Serapis, as an  
 emblem of the Sun, might be called Jupiter;  
 the other was supposed to preside over the  
 flooding of the river. Thus the rhetorician  
 Aristides, in his oration on Serapis, calls  
 him the god who, during Summer, makes  
 the waters increase, and the tempests calm.  
 On this point antient Pagan and Christian  
 authors agree. “ To Serapis they attribute  
 “ that virtue in the Nile which imparts  
 “ riches and fertility to Egypt (*b*).”—  
 “ The Egyptians give the glory of watering  
 “ their fields to Serapis (*i*).”

Let us enquire what was the origin of  
 this deity, which, perhaps, we may find, by

(*f*) Greg. Nazianzen. Orat. 9.

(*g*) Suidas in voce Serapis.

(*b*) Ruffin. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 2.

(*i*) Socrates. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 1.

collecting the scattered rays of light history affords. We have seen the Egyptians, ever attentive to what might ascertain the progress of the inundation, constructed various Nilometers in different parts of the kingdom; as in the island of Elephantina, at Hermuthis (*k*), the modern Armant, Memphis, and as far as lower Egypt. They were, at first, satisfied with sinking a chamber, the floor of which was on a level with the bed of the river, and tracing lines, on the walls, to measure the height of the water. They afterward raised a column in the centre of this chamber, which they divided into cubits and inches. This Nilometer they called Sari Api, the column of measure (*l*). This place became sacred, and the priests, in whom all their science centered, only might enter it, whose observations and discoveries, written in sacerdotal characters, guided their successors. Enlightened by meteorological tables, kept for ages with increasing perfection,

(*k*) Described by Heliodorus, lib. 19.

(*l*) Thus are these Egyptian words interpreted by Jablonski, tom. II. from which the Greeks have formed Serapis.

from this sanctuary they predicted all the phænomena of the inundation, long before they happened. Possessors of this important knowledge, they announced abundance or sterility, and were regarded by the people as oracles. That their prognostications might be more revered, they attributed them to Serapis, under whose divine protection they put the column of measure. Knowing the vulgar require sensible images, they formed a Nilometer of wood, which was the emblem of Serapis, and to which they attributed divine virtue: this they solemnly bore at the feasts of Apis. “ It was the custom to carry  
 “ the measure of the Nile into the temple of  
 “ Serapis, as the author of the inundation;  
 “ which Nilometer was, afterward, deposited  
 “ in the church, to render homage to the  
 “ Lord of waters (*m*).” Sozomen adds, this change happened under the reign of Constantine (*n*), after which the measure of the increase of the river was no more borne into the Pagan temples, but placed in the

(*m*) Ruffin. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 2.

(*n*) Sozomen. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 4.

churches. Julian (o), the Apostate, re-established things in their former state, but Theodosius destroyed the magnificent temple of Serapis, at Alexandria, and abolished this superstitious ceremony. These authors, and many more whom, were it needful, I might cite, prove the Egyptian priests first called the Nilometer Serapis, the column of measure, which name they gave to the god under whose protection they placed it, and to whom they attributed a power of making the waters increase, and the symbol of whom they, afterward, bore in their solemn feasts; thus abusing their knowledge to the encouragement of idolatry, and to render themselves respectable in the eyes of the people.

An Alexandrian coin is preserved, on one side of which the Nile reclines, depicted as an aged man, bearing a bushel on his head, and holding a cornucopia in one hand, and, in the other, a slip of the papyrus, with this inscription, *To the Nile, Holy God*; on the reverse is the head of Serapis, bearing a bushel, and this legend, *To Serapis, Holy God* (p \*).

(o) Sozomen. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 4.

(p \*) Pignorii Mensa Isiaca.

I shall not, like Jablonski, dwell on the situation of the antient temple of Serapis, which appears to me of little consequence, but shall just observe, Sir, this learned man, to whom I render homage, and whose most estimable enquiries have aided me greatly, is deceived, when he places this edifice in the isle of Raouda, where the present Mekias is situated, the only remaining one of the numerous Nilometers of Egypt. I might send you a long dissertation on this subject, and add to the knowledge of the place the testimony of the antients, but I fear to abuse your patience; my purpose was to discover the origin of the terrestrial Serapis, which I believe I have accomplished.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R    XXXIII.

OF ANUBIS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

*Anubis had temples, priests, and a city built in his honour: his statue bore a dog's head, which animal, his living image, was consecrated to him: represented the Horizon, wherefore, was held to be the inseparable companion of Isis and Osiris, and called their illegitimate son; because, not luminous himself, he shone only with borrowed light.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**A**NUBIS, regarded in Egypt as the faithful companion of Isis and Osiris, received divine honours, had temples consecrated to him, and priests, and his image was borne in all religious ceremonies. Lucian makes Socrates say, "See you not with what respect the Egyptians adore the god Anubis?" His statue was emblematic, having the head  
of

of a dog, on a human body (*p*); wherefore Virgil and Ovid call him the barker Anubis (*q*). Lucian, whose wit is exercised on all subjects that fall beneath his notice, and who, in his sarcasms, spared neither heroes nor gods, makes Momus speak thus: “ Oh  
 “ thou, whom Egypt represents with the  
 “ head of a dog, speak, who art thou?  
 “ And, since thou barkest, wherefore hast  
 “ thou suffered them to place thee among  
 “ the immortals ?”

Cynopolis (*r*), now Minieh, situated in the lower Thebais, was built in honour of Anubis. His temple no longer subsists, where the priests celebrated his festivals with great pomp, and consecrated the dog to him, as his living emblem. “ Anubis is revered in  
 “ the city of the dogs, the capital of the  
 “ Cynopolitan Præfecture, where those ani-  
 “ mals are fed with sacred food, and religion  
 “ has appointed them worship (*s*).” An event, related by Plutarch, somewhat, how-

(*p*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*q*) Æneid. lib. 8. Metamorph. lib. 9.

(*r*) The city of the dog.

(*s*) Strabo, lib. 17. Stephanus Byzantinus adds Cynopolis is a city of Egypt, where Anubis is adored.

ever, discredited them in the minds of the people. Cambyfes having killed the god Apis, and caft his body in a field, all animals refpected him, except the dog, which eat his flefh : this impiety diminished the veneration in which dogs had been held.

Cynopolis was not the only city that burnt incenfe on the altars of Anubis ; he had chapels in moft of the temples, which occafioned Juvenal to fay, how many cities venerate the dog (*t*). His image always accompanied thofe of Ifis and Ofiris, in their foletnn feafts, and, Rome having adopted the ceremonies of Egypt, the Emperor Commodus (*u*), celebrating the Ifiac feftiva's, had his head shaved, and bore, himfelf, the god Anubis. His ftatue was of gold, or gilt, as well as the accompanying emblematic attributes. In this the antients agree, and Lucian, relating the crime committed by a Syrian flave, confirms their opinion : this flave, fays he, joined fome facriligious robbers, who, entering the fanctuary of Anubis, ftole the god, two vafes, and the golden caduceus, with cynocephali of filver. The very name

(*t*) Sat. 15.

(*u*) Lamprid. cap. 9. Spartian cites the fame fact.

of Anubis signifies gilded (*x*). It was mysterious, and the priests, as we shall see, did not bestow it without a reason.

Plutarch will inform us what this emblematical deity meant. “ The circle which  
 “ bounds and divides the two hemispheres,  
 “ and, therefore, is called horizon, is named  
 “ Anubis, and is pictured in the form of a  
 “ dog because that animal watches day and  
 “ night.” (*y*) Clemens Alexandrinus, well instructed in the mystical theology of Egypt, favours this explanation. “ The two dogs  
 “ (the two Anubis) are symbols of the two  
 “ hemispheres, which surround the terrestrial globe” (*z*). In another place, he adds, some pretend that these animals, the faithful guardians of men, are types of the tropics, which, like centinels, watch the sun on the north and south.

If, Sir, we adopt the first of these interpretations, we shall find the priests, regarding Anubis as the horizon, gilded his statue to

(*x*) Jablonski *Panth. Ægypt.* tom. II. says Anubis comes from Nub, *gold*, and from Annub, *gilded*, whence the Greeks have derived Anubis.

(*y*) De Iside et Osiride.

(*z*) *Stroma* 5.

indicate

indicate that this circle, first receiving the sun's rays, seemed, at his rising, glittering with brightness, and, when he set, reflected his last beams upon the earth. They called Anubis the son of Osiris, but illegitimate, in their sacred fables, for he only returned a borrowed light to the earth, and might not, like Horus, be regarded as the father of day, or the lawful son of Osiris. We may add, the visible horizon turning with the sun is his inseparable companion.

According to the second of these explanations, where Anubis means the tropics, he is also the faithful guardian of Isis and Osiris. The course of the sun and moon is included within the Zodiack, wandering neither to the right nor left; which limits, fixed by the author of nature, might, in hieroglyphical language, be typified by a deity with the head of a dog, which should seem to oppose their passage toward the two poles. The first opinion, however, seems to me most natural, and accordant to the ideas of the priests.

You perceive, Sir, those authors who have been pleasant upon the Egyptians either did not speak what they thought, or understood  
not

not their allegories. Anubis, we may reasonably suppose, was, at first, only a symbol, invented by astronomers to express their discoveries. The people, accustomed to see it in their temples, where science was deposited, adored it as a deity; and the priests favoured their error by connecting it with religion. The worship of Anubis induced that of the dog, his type, and most of the Pagan gods, had this kind of origin. Before men could write they used imitative figures to express their ideas, which language was, at first, intelligible to all. Having invented characters which by sound might express thought, the people employed these because they might be used with more facility. The hieroglyphics were consigned to their sanctuaries, and the priests only preserved their interpretation. These allegorical signs, at length, no more had meaning, in the vulgar apprehension, but, containing the forms of things, became objects of superstition.

I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXXIV.

OF TYPHON, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

*Typhon, an evil genius ; the crocodile and hippopotamus consecrated to him ; his statue insulted when those evils did not cease of which he was the supposed author. The priests by this god figured winter, and the fatal effects of the South and South East winds. Their fables concerning Typhon passed into Phœnicia, Greece, and Italy ; the philosophers and poets of which nations, adding new allegories, introduced his worship. His origin discoverable amid these fables.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** HAVE mentioned Typhon before, Sir, because his history is connected with that of all the gods of Egypt. Hitherto you have beheld beneficent deities worshipped, and animals consecrated to the sun, the moon, and the Nile. Gratitude rendered this homage,

but the adoration of Typhon was the effect of fear. Thanksgivings and offerings were appointed for the former; this evil genius was to be pacified by sacrifices; and, when those calamities which were attributed to him did not cease, his image was insulted. Believing Typhon to be the evil principle, the Egyptians consecrated the crocodile (*a*) to him, the hippopotamus, and the afs, because of its red colour. These animals, supposed to be agreeable to him, were revered in many cities, and kept in sacred inclosures, they imagining such religious attentions would calm the fury of Typhon, whose soul was supposed to animate them. “ The Egyptians endeavoured to appease this evil genius by sacrifices (*b*)”. When unsuccessful, at certain festivals, they loaded him with opprobrious epithets and invectives, and struck his statue. “ When any extraordinary heats “ (*c*) which occasioned pestilential diseases or

(*a*) Plutarch de Iside et Osiride. Herod. lib. 2.

(*b*) Plutarch ubi. sup. . Herodotus, in confirmation, says, crocodiles, consecrated to Typhon, were worshipped in certain cities, the Egyptians being persuaded they were animated by his soul. Lib. 2.

(*c*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.



“ other calamities happened, the priests took  
 “ some of the animals dedicated to him into  
 “ a dark place; where, by menaces, they  
 “ first endeavoured to terrify them; and, if  
 “ the contagion did not cease; sacrificed them  
 “ to public vengeance”.

The purport of these ceremonies was, evidently, to calm the people's fears, and revive their hopes. While they were performing, the ills occasioned by the pestiferous South winds might cease, and the nation, supposing Typhon appeased by sacrifices, or intimidated by threats and outrages, would attribute all the glory to the priests.

The word Typhon, according to Jablonski (*d*), is derived from *Theu*, wind, and *Phou*, pernicious, which interpretation is confirmed by the most ancient authors. “ A violently  
 “ scorching wind is called Typhon (*e*).” Eustathius interprets it a burning wind (*f*); and Euripides employs the word to express a scorching whirlwind (*g*). The ancient Egyptians,

(*d*) Panth. Egypt. tom. III.

(*e*) Hesychius.

(*f*) Comment. in Iliad.

(*g*) Euripid. Phœnissæ. This same wind is called burning by Job, chap. 27, breath of fire by the Greeks, Eurus by

tians, to characterise its violence, called it *Aph*, giant.

In the course of these letters, I have, more than once, mentioned its destructive effect; but, however strong my expressions they are still short of the truth. The heavens darkened by dust, which burns the eyes, scorches the entrails, and veils the face of the sun; caravans stifled in the desert; tribes of Arabs extinct in a single day; sandy rain sometimes covering the whole surface of Egypt, and forming hills which, rolling from the desert, threaten to overwhelm and bury all living creatures: such are the destructive powers of the giant Typhon. I have read of a tempest (*b*), from the South, which continued three days and three nights, till the utter ruin of Egypt was apprehended; had it not abated this fine country would have become a fearful wilderness. The priests, to express the fury of Typhon, in their allegoric language say, he was not born, after the manner of Osiris

by the Latins, *Sem*, poison, by the Arabs, and by the modern Egyptians, *Merif*, wind of noon, or, more generally, Khamfin.

(*b*) Elmacin Hist. Saracen.

and Horus, but having torn his mother's side escaped through the opening (*i*).

Herodotus (*k*) thus describes two statues which, in his time, stood in the temple of Vulcan, at Memphis. "The one, facing—" the North, named Summer, is adored by—" the Egyptians, and surrounded by marks—" of their respect, and gratitude. The other,—" turned Southward, and called Winter, is—" very differently treated." The latter is what they whipped with rods, on certain occasions, it representing Typhon. The South wind begins to be felt, in the month of February, and causes the evils I have mentioned; the Etesian winds prevail in Summer, purify the air, and produce the most happy effects. Hence we may satisfactorily explain the sacred fable of the priests, relative to Typhon, which I have, in part, repeated. Plutarch gives it at length, but the leading traits will be here sufficient.

Osiris (*l*) ascended the throne of Egypt, reigned gloriously, and became celebrated for his beneficence and justice. Travelling the

(*i*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(*k*) Lib. 2.

(*l*) Plut. ubi supra.

world to do good to men, his brother Typhon, for some time, durst undertake nothing against his interests, because Isis was watchful for the safety of the kingdom; but, when Osiris returned from Ethiopia, Typhon, with seventy-two conspirators, inclosed his body in a wooden coffer, and threw it into the Nile. It descended into the Mediterranean, by the Tanitic branch, and was found on the coast of Phenicia, by Isis, and brought back into Egypt: but the usurper, perceiving it by night, the moon being at the full, as he hunted the boar, broke it, divided the body into fourteen parts, and scattered the members over the country. Isis collected and carefully preserved them (*m*). Typhon, delivered from his enemies, exercised tyrannical power over Egypt, and, to make the crown sure, endeavoured to kill Horus, the son of Osiris, for whom he most carefully sought; but Latona, hiding and educating him, at Butis, saved him from his pursuers, and, becoming strong, he declared war against his father's murderer, and vanquished

(*m*) Except the privities, which, thrown into the river, were devoured by the fish *Lepidotus*, the *Phagrus*, and the *Oxyrynchus*. Perhaps this trait is added to denote the prodigious fecundity of these fish, which became sacred.

and gave him in charge to his mother, loaded with chains. Isis set him at liberty, and Horus, in his anger, took away her crown, combated the tyrant again, and, after conquering him a second time, reigned in peace and glory.

A few remarks will suffice to explain this fable, which, in part, explains itself. Osiris is the general name of the sun, which bestows its benefits over the whole earth, and particularly, manifests its power in Egypt. His return from Ethiopia signifies the time when, coming from the tropic of Capricorn, he once more proceeds toward the equator, and passes through the Winter signs; during which season the South wind predominates. The seventy-two conspirators (*n*) signify the days during which it usually blows. This epocha is the death of Osiris and the triumph

(*n*) The time when the South wind is most usual, at present, is called Khamfin, or fifty, but neither this number, nor seventy-two precisely mark its duration, that being variable. This period therefore may be denoted by the nearest number, and seventy-two appears to me the most exact. I have before observed this wind rarely continues blowing more than three days together, otherwise it would render Egypt uninhabitable.

of Typhon. Horus, educated near the lake Butis, according to the Egyptians, depicted the sun attracting beneficent vapours to return them back in dews : his increasing strength and victory over the tyrant indicate his entrance into the Summer signs ; and the Etesian winds, which begin to repel the South storms. Typhon, released by Isis, informs us this evil returns, sometimes, towards the end of June, especially at the full of the moon (o). But the sun, being come to the tropic of Cancer, the North wind recovers its power, refreshes the air, expels contagion, drives the clouds towards the high summits of the Abyssinian mountains, and swells the Nile by the rains which, thence, descend in torrents. This is the glorious reign of Horus.

(o) I have seen terrible examples of this, because the South winds drive back the clouds, toward the North, which should occasion the overflowing of the river, and the country is in danger of barrenness. As this oftenest happens during the full moon, the priests say Horus, in wrath against Isis for having set Typhon at liberty, takes away her crown, and is obliged to combat the tyrant anew, over whom he remains victor : that is to say, the moon in conjunction, and journeying by day, with the sun, has lost her light ; and the North wind then gains the ascendant.

The Greeks, disciples of the Egyptians, eagerly adopted these allegories, in their Theogony ; gave them their colouring, and added new fables. Some changed the name of Typhon into Typhoeus ; others retained the antient appellation. Hesiod, in his Theogony, describes him with a hundred dragons heads, projecting from his shoulders. Pindar, in his first ode, says he was buried under Mount Etna, whence he discharged his fires. Apollodorus, who lived one hundred and forty years before Christ, describes him thus.

“ The enormous giant Typhon, foaming  
 “ with wrath, and bellowing, casts burning  
 “ rocks toward heaven, and vomits torrents  
 “ of flames. The gods, beholding him  
 “ ready to scale Olympus, fled, terrified,  
 “ and escaped into Egypt, where, pursued by  
 “ their enemy, they concealed themselves  
 “ under the forms of animals ; but Ju-  
 “ piter, perceiving Typhon afar off, struck  
 “ him with thunder, and buried him under  
 “ Mount Etna”. Hyginus, in his fables, adds, the mountain hath ever since sent forth flames. The Latins succeeded, and imitated their predecessors. Ovid thus relates the gi-

ants war. “ Typhoeus, sprung from the  
 “ earth’s entrails, terrified the heavens, and  
 “ forced the immortals to fly. Egypt, and  
 “ the shores of the Nile, famous for its  
 “ seven mouths, gave them asylum. The  
 “ dreadful sons of the earth followed, to es-  
 “ cape whose fury they were obliged to suffer  
 “ a metamorphosis. Jupiter became a shep-  
 “ herd, wherefore his statue is still represented  
 “ with horns (*p*), Apollo a crow, Bacchus  
 “ a goat, Isis a cat, Juno a white cow, Venus  
 “ a fish, and Mercury an ibis (*q\**).”

This truth; wandering from its original source, and passing from one nation to another, becomes obscure, and scarcely to be discovered, and thus succeeding poets, employing the same fables to decorate their verse, adopt words the sense of which they do not understand. The Greeks and Latins evidently, however, were desirous of explaining the adoration paid to various animals in Egypt, and feigned the gods assumed their forms to escape the pursuit of Typhon. This error

(*p*) It is not necessary, here, to note, how far the Latin poet departs from truth. The statue of Ammon is represented with horns, because this symbolical deity denoted the sun in the sign of the ram.

(*q\**) Ovid. Metam. lib. 5.



has lately been revived by the learned Warburton, but is not, therefore, more credited. Herodotus and the ancients wrote nothing like this. Hyginus, in his fables, on the contrary, affirms, “ The Egyptians suffered “ no violence to be done to animals, because they held them to be the image of the gods.” They consecrated them, either in gratitude for benefits received, or to preserve the memory of important discoveries, and honoured them as the living types of their deities.

The priests relate the tragical death of Typhon very differently, whom they drown in the waters of a pestilential lake. “ The lake Sirbon, in which Typhon is said to be buried, is near Pelusium (*q*)” and, according to Plutarch (*r*), the Egyptians called it the breath of Typhon. This lake, and its vapours, so injurious to the salubrity of Pelusium, is now no more to be found; as well as many others, it is filled up with sand.

The fable of Adonis seems to have been imitated from that of Osiris. Macrobius who, with wonderful sagacity, has explained

(*q*) Eustath. Comment. in Dionys. Perieget.

(*r*) De Iside et Osiride.

the mysteries of ancient religions, says,—At-  
 “ tentively considering the Assyrian religion,  
 “ we cannot doubt but that Adonis signifies  
 “ the sun. Philosophers have called the up-  
 “ per hemisphere, a part of which we in-  
 “ habit, Venus. Regarding the boar as the  
 “ symbol of Winter, because he loves marshy  
 “ and frozen places, they figured this animal  
 “ to have killed Adonis. Winter, there-  
 “ fore, which diminishes light, and the sun’s  
 “ heat, is the wound of Adonis (*s*)”. I  
 need not point out the resemblance between  
 this fable and that of the Egyptians. Win-  
 ter, in both, makes the country desolate,  
 and causes the sun’s death. This mysterious  
 language is embellished by the Greeks, whose  
 poetry, full of grace, nature, and feeling,  
 harmoniously sings the grief of Venus for her  
 lover. Thus we perceive how an allegory, under  
 the veil of which the phænomena of nature  
 are described, is metamorphosed in passing  
 from Egypt to Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome:  
 but, collecting hints from the antients, with  
 judgment, we again discover it, nearly, as it  
 was first invented.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*s*) Saturnal. lib. i.

L E T T E R

## L E T T E R XXXV.

OF NEPHTHYS, A SYMBOLICAL DEITY.

*Nephtys, the barren wife of Typhon, having commerce with Osiris, became fruitful: signified the sandy plains, which lay between the Nile and the Red Sea, and are greatly exposed to the South East winds. The adultery of Osiris with Nephtys denoted the years when a high flood occasioned the waters to extend so far. Thueri, or Aso, Queen of Ethiopia, the supposed concubine of Typhon, denoted the South-wind, which joining the East, formed the South East, dreaded by the Egyptians for its parching quality, and the torrents of sand it drove over Egypt.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

THE priests of Egypt, continuing their allegory, gave Typhon a wife, named Nephtys (*t*), the sister and rival of Isis; she was struck with barrenness, and only became fruit-

(*t*) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

ful

ful when Osiris, deceived by appearances, had commerce with her. The crown of Lotus, which adorned the god, and which he, forgetting, left with Nephthys, discovered his crime. Such is their fable, relative to the wife of Typhon, which we will endeavour to explain.

You recollect, Sir, the Nile was sometimes called Osiris ; and Isis, under certain circumstances, signified the plain it inundated : wherefore this goddess was called his lawful wife ; and the inundation, in sacerdotal language, their marriage. When the river, in years of extraordinary fertility, overflowed the hills by which it was bounded, Eastward, and spread over the deserts, it made them fruitful, and the sands were covered with the verdure of plants, the most remarkable of which was the Lotus. Here is the crown which betrayed the adultery of Osiris. “ The  
“ Egyptians (u) gave the confines of their  
“ kingdom, toward the sea, the name of  
“ Nephthys. When the Nile extends that  
“ far, they call it the commerce of Osiris

(u) Plut. ubi supra.

“ with

“ with Nephthys, which is announced by  
 “ the Lotus growing amid the sands.” The  
 characteristic word Nephthys, *the country ex-*  
*posed to the winds*, (x) unveils the natural  
 sense which the priests concealed in fable. All  
 that part of Egypt, from the Nile to the Red  
 Sea, and from Syene to the Mediterranean,  
 not defended by mountains, is greatly exposed  
 to the South-East winds, and, therefore, al-  
 legorically, called the barren wife of Typhon,  
 who there wantons at will, and rolls the sands  
 of those vast solitudes over the plains of  
 Egypt.

This evil genius had a concubine, not less  
 dangerous, named Thueri, or Afo, Queen of  
 Ethiopia (y). When Osiris returned from  
 his travels, Typhon, as I have said, inhared  
 him, aided by seventy two conspirators, and  
 Queen Afo. “ The Queen Afo, who assisted  
 “ Typhon, means the South wind; coming

(x) From Neph and Theu, Egyptian words, Jablonski  
 Panth. Egypt. Tom III.

(y) Thueri comes from *Thures*, South wind, Afo, in  
 the ancient Thebaic dialect, signified Ethiopia: thus the  
 Queen Afo is the wind most usual in Ethiopia, that is the  
 South. Jab. Panth. Egypt. Tom III.

“ from Ethiopia. If that repels the etefian  
 “ winds, which drive the clouds over that  
 “ burning country, it prevents the rain which  
 “ produces the increase of the Nile; and the  
 “ scorching breath of victorious Typhon de-  
 “ vours the fields” (z). Such is the alle-  
 gory the priests invented concerning the wife  
 and concubine of Typhon, the one represent-  
 ing the sandy deserts which seem abandoned  
 to the fury of the East winds, and the other  
 the storms of the South. When the two  
 winds united (a), Typhon came, accom-  
 panied by Nephthys, and Aso; dethroned  
 Osiris, and brought desolation into the rich  
 valley which the Nile waters. These alle-  
 goric personages, we perceive, were invented  
 in these early ages, when men were in need  
 of sensible images to make themselves under-  
 stood. Homer, the poet nearest this antiquity,  
 often expresses himself like the priests of

(z) Plut. de Iside et Osiride.

(a) The South and East winds, blowing both at once,  
 form the South East, which the Egyptians dread most; it  
 being most parching, and driving the greatest quantity of  
 sands. The moment it begins the thermometer rises to  
 above 33 degrees, and, if it continues, to above 36.

Thebes

Thebes and Memphis. Typhon, Nephthys, and Afo are now forgotten in Egypt ; but the same winds, known under the general name of Khamfin, continue to occasion the same evils, and to desolate this land of delights.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R    XXXVI.

OF CANOBUS, A PRETENDED EGYPTIAN  
GOD.

*Canobus, called by the writers of the lower empire Canopus, was the pilot of Menelaus, who died on the Egyptian shore, where his tomb was built: the place called in Egyptian Cabi Noub, Land of Gold. A City and Temples built there. Deceived by the name Canobus, the Greeks said they were built in honour of him. Ruffinus, in a long fable, pretends to prove the deity adored in the temple of Canobus was a pitcher, which was merely an offering to the god of the Nile.*

TO M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**CANOBUS** became famous under the Ptolemies. It is important, therefore, to enquire what was its origin, why it has been deified by historians, and what it signified,  
according



according to the Egyptians. Various writers of Greece and Italy, speaking after Homer and Hecatæus, make Menelaus land in Egypt, and say that Canobus, his pilot, dying of the bite of a viper, had a temple erected to his memory, on the shore. This fact is too well supported to be questioned: they add that the city of Canobus (*b*) was afterward built here, in honour of this pilot. Dionysius Periegetes, speaking after them, but going beyond them, says, in the most northern bay of Egypt, is the famous temple of the Spartan Canobus. It would be astonishing, Sir, had the Egyptians, who, as the Scripture informs us, held strangers in extreme aversion (Genesis, chap. XLIII), raised a Greek pilot to the rank of the gods, when we know they never granted that honour to any mortal. Herodotus, who lived many years among the priests of Heliopolis and Memphis, learned from them that Menelaus, after receiving Helen from King Proteus, rewarded the service by depredations, and pillaged the sea

(*b*) In other parts of this work I have called it Canopus, in conformity to modern use, but the true name is Canobus.

coasts before he set sail (*c*): nor does he mention Canobus. Is it credible that such ingratitude would have occasioned the Apotheosis of his pilot, contrary, also, to the manners and religion of the Egyptians? Let us not believe this improbable opinion of Dionysius Periegetes, who is the only profane writer who grants the honours of a temple to the Spartan.

There were several temples at Canobus (*d*), the most famous was that of Serapis, the most ancient that of Hercules, built in one of the suburbs (*e*), which are all antiquity mentions. Strabo (*f*) describes the temple of Serapis, adorned by the Ptolemies with royal magnificence. They added various

(*c*) We cannot doubt the testimony of Herodotus, who, being a Greek, would not have invented a lye injurious to his nation, before whom he read his history; the fact must be well known, in his time, and the love of truth only could render it supportable.

(*d*) Ammianus Marcellinus. lib. 22.

(*e*) Herod. lib. 2.

(*f*) Lib. 17. See Letter III. Vol. I. in which I have described, after Strabo, the ceremonies practised here, and the concourse of people who come from Alexandria, and all parts of Egypt.

edifices in which an academy was formed, where the Belle Lettres, and, particularly, the mysteries of religion and the ancient language of Egypt were taught. Many of the learned flourished here; and Ptolemy (the geographer) rendered it famous. “ He passed  
 “ forty years in the temple of Canobus,  
 “ during which he studied Astronomy. His  
 “ system and discoveries are there engraved  
 “ on columns (*g*).” Serapis was the tutelar deity, and his worship, encouraged by the Ptolemies, was propagated in Greece. Pausanias (*h*), travelling this fine country, saw, in the citadel of Corinth, a temple dedicated to the Canobic Serapis. The sciences, and the Pythagorean and Platonic Philosophy, were, for ages, cultivated at Canobus; but Theodosius, having destroyed its colleges and temples, a part of human learning was buried under their ruins, and the learned dispersed.

Aristides, the rhetorician, desirous of knowing the origin of the name Canobus, questioned an Egyptian priest, and gives the following account. “ I was informed, by

(*g*) Olympiodori Comment.

(*h*) In Corinthiacis.

“ a priest,

“ a priest, eminent in his order, that, long  
 “ before Menelaus landed, this place was  
 “ called Canobus. He demonstrated this  
 “ word could not be properly written with  
 “ Greek characters, and that it signified  
 “ Land of Gold.”—“ We may well suppose,”  
 adds Aristides, “ the Egyptians knew their  
 “ own history better than Homer and Heca-  
 “ tæus.” M. de la Croix (*i*) confirms this  
 testimony. The remains of the Coptic  
 language leave no room to doubt the fidelity  
 of this account; Cah, a word which, be-  
 cause of its aspiration, could not be written  
 in Greek, signified land; and Noub, gold.

The Greeks, knowing that most cities of  
 Egypt bore the name of the deities they  
 adored, and that the tomb of Canobus was  
 in a place called Cahinoub, deceived, no  
 doubt, by the similarity of sound, have  
 affirmed this city was built in honour of  
 him, and Dionysius Periegetes has dedicated  
 a temple to him, it is easy to perceive with  
 what truth. The primitive Christians,  
 delighting to ridicule Pagan idolatry, have

(*i*) Dissertation Philologique.

endeavoured to give this error credit. “Ca-  
 “ nobus (*k*) and his wife Eumenouth, were  
 “ buried on the sea shore, twelve miles from  
 “ Alexandria (*l*), and honoured with divine  
 “ worship.” Epiphanius is the first author  
 who hazarded this assertion. Ruffinus is  
 more prolix; and, in his usual style, farther  
 from truth. “How shall we describe (*m*)  
 “ the crimes of superstition at Canobus,  
 “ where, pretending to study the sacerdotal  
 “ letters (the ancient Egyptian language was  
 “ so called) they publicly professed magic!  
 “ This place, which may be called the  
 “ source of demons, became more celebrated,  
 “ among the Pagans, than Alexandria itself;  
 “ nor will it be unseasonable to reveal the  
 “ origin of these monstrous errors. The  
 “ Chaldæans were said to transport the fire,  
 “ their god, throughout the provinces; de-  
 “ fying the gods of other nations to combat,  
 “ on condition, if he was victor, he should be  
 “ adored. The priest of Canobus accepted

(*k*) Epiphan. tom. II.

(*l*) The exact distance from Alexandria to Aboukir,  
 formerly Canobus.

(*m*) Ruffin. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. 2.

“ the

“ the challenge, and imagined the following  
“ trick. Earthen pitchers are made in  
“ Egypt, the substance of which is extremely  
“ porous, and the water filters through it,  
“ and purifies itself. Taking one of these,  
“ he closed the pores with wax, and, painting  
“ various figures on it, filled it with water,  
“ and called it his god; placing on its top  
“ the head of an ancient statue, said to be  
“ that of the pilot of Menelaus. The Chal-  
“ dæans came, the combat began, fire was  
“ lighted around the pitcher, the wax melted,  
“ the water ran through the pores, and ex-  
“ tinguished the fire. The fraud of the  
“ priest made the god of Canopus victor,  
“ and his image has ever since been repre-  
“ sented with short feet, a narrow neck, a  
“ ~~belly~~ belly and back round, like a pitcher, and  
“ in this form is adored as the conqueror of  
“ all gods.”

I know not where Ruffinus found this fable, for he cites no authorities; but it is too puerile to need refutation. It plainly contradicts the worship of the Egyptians, who never adored water. Had this combat really happened, Clemens Alexandrinus, who was better acquainted with the religion of Alex-

andria than the priests of Aquileia, would not have forgotten it ; but this tale may lead to the discovery of some truth. The Egyptians, from the remotest ages, have fabricated precious earthen vessels, through which the water is filtered and clarified ; the Greeks called them *Βαυκαλιον*, the Arabs Bardak. This was an interesting invention, where, during five months of the year, the Nile is defiled by sand, mud, and insects. The water, before it is drank, is left to settle in large jars, into which the powder of pounded almonds is thrown, and the heterogeneous particles sink, in a few hours ; but, to render it more agreeable, it is exposed to the north wind, at the window, in Bardaks. It oozes through the pores, and, being continually rippled by the refreshing breath of the north, it contracts a coolness most delicious in a climate so sultry. Poor and rich drink, with a kind of voluptuousness, water which has been in these vases. The art of making them was, therefore, a precious discovery for Egypt. The ancients, who made this discovery, felt its importance, and, as a mark of gratitude to the god of the Nile, consecrated one of these pitchers, in the temple of Serapis,

Serapis, at Canobus. This offering Ruffinus, assisted by fable, endeavours to pass for a god. There are various proofs of what I advance. A coin, struck in the time of Adrian, by the inhabitants of Canobus, bears one of these vases, with a serpent wound round the mouth (*n*). This figure is known to be the emblem of Cnep, the good genius, and, in a more extensive sense, the Author of Nature. A canal, which is cut from the river, and falls into the sea, near Canobus, was called Agathodaimon (*o*), the Good Genius, doubtless, because it approached a city where the people worshipped Serapis, and the priests the Supreme Being. It is natural to suppose, therefore, the pitcher deposited in his temple was merely a mark of homage to his beneficence (*p*): like consecrations are found in many of the Egyptian monuments. The

(*n*) Cotelerii Monumenta, tom. I.

(*o*) Ptol. Geograph.

(*p*) Among the curiosities which M. Dombey, who has travelled South-America nine years, brought to France, I remarked vases, taken from the tombs of the Peruvians, very similar to those found in the caverns of Saccara; and golden idols, like what the Arabs get from the mummies, which their cupidity induces them to search and destroy.



sacrifice, engraved on the rock near Babain, to Jupiter Ammon, or the Sun of Spring, has seven vases of this kind, which bear the three piles on which the immolated lambs lye. Obelisks were symbols of the Sun's rays, and their shadows indicated his course while above the horizon. These facts all attest the Egyptians carefully consecrated their inventions to the gods. The name Cahinoub, Land of Gold, bestowed on the country the clay of which was the properest for the composition of the pitchers through which the water was filtered, teaches us with what reason the priests offered one to the gods, in the very place where they were fabricated, and where, perhaps, they had been invented.

I have the honour to be, &c

LETTER

## L E T T E R    X X X V I I .

O F T H O T H ,    A    S Y M B O L I C A L    D E I T Y .

*Thoth held to be a famous and extraordinary man, by many writers, who attributed to him the invention of all arts, sciences, and human institutions, and called him Trismegistus, thrice Great. This demonstrates the personage to be allegoric. Thoth signifies column, in Egyptian, and approved works, being engraved on columns, were all, generally, called Thoth. The three Thoths, or Mercuries, may indicate the birth, progress, and perfection of human knowledge.*

T O    M .    L .    M .

Grand Cairo.

**H**A V I N G given some account of the principal Egyptian deities, I shall next speak of Thoth, or the famous personage who received the homage of antiquity, and was held to be the inventor of almost all human science.

science. His existence is placed in ages so distant, that it is next to impossible to obtain information on subjects so concealed by the darkness of time. Plato, who wrote two thousand years ago, and had been instructed in the priest's school, at Heliopolis, knew not himself what judgment to form of Thoth, then too antient to discover his origin.—“ Theuth,” for so he calls him, “ invented  
 “ letters, distinguished vowels from consonants, and mutes from liquids, a discovery  
 “ which should make him regarded as a god,  
 “ or a divine man. Fame says he lived in  
 “ Egypt.” Amid this incertitude, the most prudent method will be to faithfully cite, and impartially examine, passages from the antients.

Thoth was differently named by different people. “ The Greeks, says Philo of Biblos,  
 “ (q) gave the name of Hermes, or Mercury, to Taaout, whom the Egyptians  
 “ call Thoith, and the Alexandrians Thoth.” Historians agree in attributing to him the invention of most arts. “ Thoth lived in the  
 “ remotest ages, and, though a man, pos-

(q) Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. 1.

“ fessed

“ fessed all sciences, which obtained him the  
 “ surname of Trismegistus, thrice great  
 “ (*r*).” He divided discourses into several  
 parts (*s*), first named many things, invented  
 numbers (*t*), and measures, and formed arith-  
 metic into a system (*u*). The Egyptians say  
 he taught them geometry, a science absolutely  
 necessary to them, astronomy, and astrology;  
 and add that, having observed the nature and  
 harmony of sounds, he formed the lyre. Cle-  
 mens Alexandrinus (*x*) mentions the code of  
 laws, confided to the guard of the priests, and  
 Ælian describes it under the denomination of  
 the Code of Mercury (Thoth). The creation  
 of theology, the establishment of religious  
 worship, and the order of sacrifices are also at-  
 tributed to him (*y*). This doctrine was con-  
 tained in the books of Mercury, deposited in  
 the temples, where the priests found all that

(*r*) Lactantius, lib. 1.

(*s*) Diodorus, Plato, and Eusebius, affirm he invented  
 letters, and first wrote books.

(*t*, Plato in Phædro.

(*u*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

(*x*) Strom. 6. Cicero (de Natura Deorum) and Lac-  
 tantius say he gave laws to the Egyptians.

(*y*) Diod. Sic. lib. 1.

related

related to religion. Diodorus farther adds the Egyptians affirmed arts, sciences, and institutions were invented by Thoth, or Mercury.

If we reflect on the nature of the mind, which slowly proceeds from truth to truth, and examine the annals of history, we find but a small number, who possess creative genius, existing from time to time on the earth, and announcing to man some few important discoveries. Plato, an enlightened judge, simply considering Thoth as the inventor of letters and writing, called him a god, or a divine man; we are therefore obliged to think this personage, on whom universal knowledge is bestowed, never had existence; but that the learned of a nation which seems to have approached the origin of mankind have published, in his name, the knowledge they had acquired, during thousands and thousands of years. This reasonable supposition is confirmed by the authority of many great men. Iamblichus, in his Egyptian Mysteries, makes Abamon, a priest of Egypt, speak thus; “ We rightly regard Mercury, the god of eloquence, as the common deity of priests; “ for it is the same mind which presides over “ the

“ the true science of religion, therefore, our  
 “ ancestors, dedicating their works, the  
 “ fruits of their wisdom, to him, adorned  
 “ them with the name of Mercury.”

These Egyptian books were published under the name of Thoth, or Mercury. Galen, who learned science in the academy of Alexandria, teaches us how this was practised.

“ All discoveries, made in Egypt, must be  
 “ marked by the seal of the approbation of  
 “ the learned; they were then engraved on  
 “ the columns (*z*), without the author’s  
 “ name, and deposited in the sanctuaries.  
 “ Hence the prodigious number of books at-  
 “ tributed to Mercury. The disciples of Py-  
 “ thagoras, imitating this example, put the  
 “ name of Pythagoras at the head of their  
 “ works.”

These passages prove Thoth was not a man, but that works, obtaining the approbation of the priests colleges, were engraved on columns called Thoth (*a*), as we shall presently

(*z*) Galen contra Julian. lib. 1.

(*a*) Usually called columns of Thoth; but Galen, knowing this Egyptian word signified column, would not commit a pleonasm.

see, to which they gave this general denomination. The spirit by which the learned declared themselves inspired, and to which they paid homage for their knowledge, was Phtha, the artist of nature, and source of information. “ The Egyptians (*b*) affirm that Vulcan  
 “ (*c*) taught them the principles of philosophy, and that their pontifs and prophets  
 “ bestowed on themselves the title of his  
 “ priests.” Thus, in the criticisms of Scaliger, Vulcan is called the Legislator of Egypt.

These columns, on which the discoveries worthy to be transmitted to posterity were engraved, deserve to be examined. “ Mercury  
 “ (*d*) invented mysterious columns (*Στηλαι*)  
 “ and commanded they should inscribe on  
 “ them the laws by which the stars moved.”  
 “ —The Egyptians were the first who  
 “ measured the heavens and earth, and transmitted this knowledge to their descendants  
 “ by engraving it on columns” (*e*). Proclus

(*b*) Diogenes Laertius.

(*c*) The same as Phtha.

(*d*) Manetho, lib. 5.

(*e*) Achilles Tatius, Comment. in Aratum.

(*f*) adds, they also inscribed remarkable actions, and interesting inventions. These stones, extremely hard, composed an immortal book, a kind of Cyclopædia, which included all arts and sciences, invented, or made perfect, in past ages; wherefore the priests undertook nothing till they had first consulted them (*g*). Pythagoras and Plato read them, and thence obtained the rudiments of their philosophy. Theophilus of Antioch (*b*) asks, “ To what purpose has Pythagoras penetrated the Egyptian sanctuaries, “ and consulted the columns of Mercury?” Sanchoniathon (*i*), the most ancient historian, except Moses, vaunts of having obtained his information from the monuments of the temples of Taaout, and in the mysterious books of the Ammonians.

The custom of making marble, and its durable characters, the book of science, is almost as ancient as the world. We have reason to believe this book was the first men ever read. “ The patriarch Seth, knowing

(*f*) In Timæum, lib. 1.

(*g*) Iamblichus de Mysteriis, Egypt.

(*b*) Lib. 3.

(*i*) Apud. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. 1.



“ Adam had predicted all that earth contains  
 “ should perish, either by conflagration or  
 “ universal deluge; and fearing philosophy  
 “ and astronomy would be lost to man, and  
 “ buried in forgetfulness, engraved his know-  
 “ ledge on two columns, the one of brick,  
 “ the other of stone, that should the waters  
 “ destroy the first, the latter might remain,  
 “ and teach men astronomical discoveries.  
 “ This column is still to be seen in the Siri-  
 “ adic land.” (k)

Let us hear what Manetho says, the famous  
 historian, and sacred Egyptian writer, who  
 lived more than three centuries before Jose-  
 phus. He affirms (l) “ that he obtained  
 “ his knowledge from the pillars (Στηλαι)  
 “ in the Siriadic land, on which Thoth, the  
 “ first Mercury, had engraved it, in the sa-  
 “ cred language and hieroglyphic characters;  
 “ whence the good genius, son of the second  
 “ Mercury, had these characters translated  
 “ into the dialect of the priests, and written  
 “ in sacerdotal letters.” Here, Sir, are  
 two men, of two nations, who engrave their

(k) Antiq. Jud. lib. 1.

(l) Manetho, in his Sothis, dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus, vide Syncelli Chronographiam.

discoveries on marble. I shall not examine whether Seth, as Jablonski supposes (*m*), be the same as Thoth; or if Josephus, posterior to Manetho, wished to transfer the honour of an act to the patriarch which the Egyptians had long attributed to themselves. This is an enquiry of mere curiosity; the matter of most importance would be to prove, from authentic monuments, the existence of these columns, and the place where. Both these historians call it the Siriadic land, a land as much unknown to the ancients as moderns; which has inclined several of the learned to imagine that, for Siriadic, we ought to read Siringic, which signifies subterranean alleys. This idea was, perhaps, suggested by the following passage. “ It is  
 “ affirmed (*n*) that the Egyptian priests, in-  
 “ structed in all that concerned religion, on  
 “ the approach of the deluge, feared lest divine  
 “ worship would be effaced from the memory  
 “ of man. To preserve it, therefore, they dug,  
 “ at a vast expence, and in various parts of  
 “ the kingdom, subterranean winding pas-

(*m*) Panth. Egypt. lib. 3. cap. 20.

(*n*) Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. 22.

“ fages, in the walls of which they engraved  
 “ their knowledge, under the forms of various  
 “ animals, and birds, called by them hiero-  
 “ glyphics, and which are unintelligible to  
 “ the Latins.”

This writer, it seems, has decided the question; and by the Siriadic land must be understood the subterranean canals dug in the rocks round Thebes and Memphis. In the immense labyrinths, beneath the plain of Saccara, are vast numbers of the figures of men, birds, and animals, sculptured in the walls; like hieroglyphicks are found in the numerous caverns of the mountains near Thebes, among which sacred characters, some are painted, some engraved, and some in basso relievo, divided into compartments, or columns. Are not these the sanctuaries which the priests alone might enter, and where they confided to stone historical events, the wonders of art, and the inventions of science? I know the Scholiast on Sophocles (g) pretends the columns ( $\Sigma\tau\eta\lambda\alpha\iota$ ) on which

(g) In Electram.

these memorable things were inscribed (\*) were square stones : so they were, perhaps, in Greece ; but obelisks, columns, and the walls of temples and caverns, in which were innumerable hieroglyphics, divided into compartments, were the *Στηλαι* of the Egyptians, as Sanchoniathon, Manetho, and the most ancient authors attest. The monuments described by Ammianus Marcellinus still remain, and the traveller beholds them with barren admiration, as the first efforts of human genius to render its labours immortal.

But the testimony of authors will not be sufficient, Sir, to persuade us these hieroglyphics were anterior to the deluge, the truth or falsehood of which can only be satisfactorily proved by understanding and reading them. There is little doubt but they would inform us when they were engraved, and give the history of the first ages of the world ; at least, we may reasonably conclude these characters preceded writing, and are the most an-

\* It seems strange the Author should suppose the inscriptions on the columns here meant, which were merely the boundaries, or goal, of a chariot course, could have any relation to the hieroglyphic learning of the Egyptians. T.

cient mode of conveying knowledge that has descended to these ages.

This vaunted personage, Thoth, is then demonstrated never to have existed; but that the Egyptian priests published their works under that general title, when honoured by the unanimous suffrages of the colleges. The interpretation of the word renders this undoubted. Jablonski (*p*) has proved that Thoth signified column. The Greeks translating the word by that of  $\Sigma\tau\eta\lambda\eta$  have preserved its signification. Since the learned of Egypt were accustomed to write their books without adding their name, it was natural they should take that of the monuments which were to transmit them to posterity. It even should seem this honour was granted only to those who made important discoveries, since, to obtain it, the approbation of all the academicians of the nation was requisite. Thus when the Latins, and others, who have no profound knowledge in Egyptian history, speak of the *columns* of *Thoth*, they commit the same pleonasm as those geo-

(*p*) Jablonski Tom. III. Thoth, Theuth, or Thoith, come from the Egyptian Theuthi, column.

graphers who call Ætna Mount Gibel (*q*) Observe, I entreat you, Sir, that Sancho-niathon, Manetho, Galen, and the writers who were instructed in the mysteries of Egypt, and went to the source of knowledge, do not commit this fault, and only say they engraved on columns, or Στηλαι, remarkable events, and the marvellous works of art. Thus when, according to Ælian (*r*), the priests affirmed Sesostris had been instructed in the sciences by Thoth, or Mercury, it signified that when initiated they taught him to read the history of human learning, inscribed on columns, in hieroglyphics. They first bore the simple title of Thoth, but the custom of consulting them, the sacred places in which they were preserved, and the knowledge they contained, rendered them respectable. They were consecrated by religion, and placed under the immediate protection of Phtha, or the creative spirit.

These principles established, we may explain, with probability, the three Thoths, or Mercuries, enumerated by the Egyptians,

(*q*) Gibel, in Arabic, signifies mountain.

(*r*) Lib. 12.

the one before, and the two others after, the deluge. The first indicated the infancy of human knowledge; either because some monuments had escaped the destruction of men, or that those they soon after raised contained knowledge appertaining to times anterior to that dreadful æra. The second Thoth denotes the efforts of the Egyptians in the discovery of physical and astronomical truths, the translation of the hieroglyphics into sacerdotal characters, and the establishment of laws and religion. The third was the flourishing state of science, the progress of the arts, and the perfection to which they were carried; as the obelisks, temples, and pyramids attest, the grandeur and magnificence of which no nation has equalled. These æras the Egyptian priests clearly described by the epithet *Trismegistus*, thrice great, which they gave to their allegoric Thoth.

Thus, Sir, you have seen the books of Thoth, or Hermes, were a collection of the productions of the literati of Egypt, and formed their Cyclopædia. These perished in the conflagration of the Ptolemæan library, and the originals, which remain engraved,

in a thousand places, in Egyptian marble, are unintelligible. Of all the treasures of antient learning we possess only a few pearls. As to the Hermetic books, so vaunted by those who lose their time and substance in search of the philosopher's stone, they are imaginary works, falsely attributed to Hermes, or the Egyptian Thoth.

I have the honour to be, &c.



## L E T T E R XXXVIII.

## OF THE VOCAL STATUE.

*The statue of Memnon anciently famous for the sound it gave, at sun-rising: called by the priests son of the day. Homer celebrates the son of Aurora, the conqueror of Antilochus, which his commentators, and succeeding poets, erroneously apply to the Egyptian Memnon. The statue of Thebes was named Amenophis. Memnon, who was at the siege of Troy much later, was sent from Susa, by Teutam, Emperor of Assyria. The vocal statue broken by Cambyfes, and the trunk, after long ceasing to sound, began again, under the Ptolemies; pronounced the seven vowels, before its fall. The reason given why the priests called this statue the image of the sun, and the cousin of Osiris, and the derivation of its name, Amenophis.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I** BRIEFLY mentioned the statue of Memnon, Sir, when describing the ruins of Thebes; but, the great names engraved on the pedestal pleading in favour of the wonders

wonders related of it, I cannot conclude these letters without endeavouring to discover, amid the darkness of time, some traces of its history, celebrated by a few Egyptian, and a hundred Greek and Latin, authors, whose opinions often differ, and some of which bear the marks of blind credulity. Others, more sage, unable to disbelieve their senses, or give faith to miracles, have remained in doubt. I will faithfully cite their words, and, by comparing them, you will form some judgment of a statue so celebrated in antiquity.

Among the ruins of Thebes we remarked many colossal statues, most of them thrown down, or mutilated. The greatest was at the entrance of the vestibules of the tomb I described, named Osymandyas by Diodorus (*s*), and, according to Strabo (*t*), Ifmandes by the Egyptians. A multitude of writers, however, have called it Memnon (*u*). This statue, less marvellous for  
its

(*s*) Diod. lib. 1.

(*t*) Lib. 17.

(*u*) Osymandyas and Ifmandes were probably its vulgar name among the Egyptians. The words are derived from

its gigantic size, and the hardness of its granite, than for the property it possessed of yielding a sound at sun-rise, was broken by Cambyfes. One half was thrown down, the other part remains on its base. “ The  
 “ statue of Memnon (x), represented a man  
 “ in the bloom of youth, with his face  
 “ toward the rising sun, and, when first  
 “ shone on by its rays, it was said to  
 “ speak.”——“ Thebes, famous for its  
 “ hundred gates, and the vocal statue of  
 “ Memnon, which greets Aurora, his mother, when she rises” (y). The priests of Egypt called him son of the day (z), and according to Diodorus, the cousin of Osiris. Homer first spoke of the son of Aurora.  
 “ Nestor cherished in his heart the remembrance of his generous Antilochus, slain

Ou Smandi, to yield a sound. Memnon, also, may come from Emnoni, of stone, whence the Greeks have formed Memnon Ismandes. Vide Jablonski de Memnone.

(x) Philostratus in *Vitâ Apollonii Tyanæi*. lib. 6.

(y) Dionys. Perieget. *Orbis Descriptio*.

(z) In the ancient Egyptian tongue Eho is day, whence the Greeks have formed *Hés*, Aurora, and called Memnon, her son. Jablons. de Memnone

“ by

“ by the illustrious son of Aurora” (*a*). His Commentators have all thought this passage related to the Egyptian Memnon; but the poet might signify by this one of the chiefs who came, from the East, to the aid of Troy. It was a metaphoric language familiar in his time; the scripture uses it when it calls the people of those climates children of the East. Succeeding Poets differently explained his thought. Aurora, says Hesiod, in his Theogony, had by Tithon the valiant Memnon, who bore a brazen helmet, and was king of Ethiopia. “ The brave Antilochus (*b*). “ magnanimous of soul, desirous to save his “ father’s life, fell beneath Memnon, the “ chief of an Ethiopian army (*c*): one of “ the horses of Nestor, transpierced by a javelin Paris threw, stopped his car.” The

(*a*) *Odyſſey*.

(*b*) *Pindar. Od. II.*

(*c*) These passages relate to the Egyptian Memnon. The Greeks long called the Delta Egypt, and all the country farther South Ethiopia. Homer makes Menelaus speak thus to Telemachus, “ I went up Egypt as far as Ethiopia;” and, as he takes his Hero only to Thebes, he evidently meant the Thebais. Damis, the companion of Apollonius Thyanæus, declares he saw the Temple and statue of Memnon in Ethiopia, that is to say in Upper Egypt.

Greek

Greek and Latin poets, supported by these authorities, confound the Trojan and Egyptian Memnon. Virgil (*d*) speaks of the troops of Aurora, and the arms of the black Memnon. This colour, meant to denote the hero's country, must not be regarded as a sign of deformity, for Homer, celebrating Eury-pilus, calls him the most beauteous of mortals, except the divine Memnon (*e*). "Aurora, who had favoured the Trojans, was no longer moved by the miseries of Ilium, nor of Hecuba. Affliction more deep invaded her heart, she wept her own woes, and lamented the death of Memnon (*f*)."

On the base of the statue was the following epigram, written by the poet Asclepiodotus.

"Joy to Thetis, goddess of the sea! Know that Memnon, who died fighting under the Trojan ramparts, daily utters a sweet sound, near the tombs, dug in the Lybian mounts, where the impetuous Nile divides Thebes, famous for its gates; while Achilles, insatiable in battle, speaks not near

(*d*) *Æneid.* lib. 1.

(*e*) *Odyss.* lib. 5.

(*f*) *Ovid. Metam.* lib. 13.

“ the walls of Ilium, nor in Theſſalian  
“ ſong.”

Thus, Sir, the Memnon of Egypt, or Ethiopia, for ſo the ancients called the Thebais, was generally ſuppoſed the ſame who perished, gloriously warring with the Greeks; but theſe are the teſtimonies of poets, who were more deſirous to give us affecting tales, and brilliant fictions, than hiſtorical truths. Continue we to examine the fables invented concerning his origin. Aurora (*g*), in love with Tithon, carried him into Ethiopia, and had by him Emathion and Memnon. Iſacius Tzetzes adopts the ſame allegory. “ Tithon,  
“ ſon of Laomedon, was beloved by the god-  
“ deſs of day, of whom were born Memnon  
“ and Emathion.” Diodorus explains this paſſage thus (*b*). “ Tithon, ſon of Lao-  
“ medon, and brother of Priam, led his ar-  
“ mies into the Eaſtern countries of Aſia, as  
“ far as Ethiopia, whence aroſe the fable of  
“ Memnon, born of Aurora.”

But who is this hero, who aided the Trojans? For the fables of the poets always have

(*g*) Apollodori Biblioth. lib. 3. cap. 11.

(*b*) Lib. 4.

some foundation in truth. Diodorus will inform us. “ Memnon came (*i*) to the succour of Troy, leading the armies of Teutam, Emperor of Assyria, whose assistance Priam, sovereign of the kingdom of Troy, dependant on that emperor, had implored. Teutam sent him twenty thousand men, Ethiopians and Susians; and two hundred cars, commanded by Memnon. This warrior, beloved by the emperor, and then governor of Persia, was in the prime of manhood, and famous for his strength of body and mind. He had built a palace in the city of Susa, which bore his name till the reign of the Persians, and the public way, still called the Memnonian road.” Strabo adds (*k*) that Tithon, the father of Memnon, founded Susa, which was a hundred and twenty stadia in circumference, of an oblong form, and its citadel was called Memnonium, the citadel of Memnon. Herodotus, also (*l*), calls Susa the city of Memnon, and Pausanias (*m*) affirms this general came to the

(*i*) Diød. Sic. lib. 2.

(*k*) Lib. 15.

(*l*) Lib. 5.

(*m*) In Phocicis, cap. 31.

siege of Troy from Susa, not from Ethiopia, and that he had subjected all the Median nations to the river Choaspes.

These authorities, the number of which I might augment, were it necessary, evidently prove that, during the memorable siege whose heroes are made immortal by the genius of one man, the Assyrian emperor sent a brave general to aid Priam, named Memnon, who had no relation to the Memnon of Egypt (*n*). It is probable, as I have already said, Homer, calling him the son of Aurora, only meant to signify the East, whence he came. After poets invented the fable we have recited to adorn their verses.

Let us now examine the real name of the statue which is the subject of our enquiries, the opinion the ancients had of it, and the intention of the priests in erecting it. Herodotus is the first who calls it Memnon, and he but just mentions it, because it had lately been mutilated when he visited Egypt. A multitude of travellers since him have spoken of it

(*n*) Philostratus affirms Memnon was from Ethiopia, (*i. e.* the Thebais) where he reigned before the Trojan war. The Memnon of that siege is greatly posterior to, and different from, the former. *Vita Apollonii Thyanaei.*



with enthusiasm, and generally agree in giving it the name of Memnon, which only proves this denomination had been adopted by foreigners. But to obtain truth we must hear the Egyptians, who best ought to understand their own monuments. The Alexandrian Chronicle contains the following passage.—

“ Cambyfes commanded they should cut  
 “ Amenophis through the middle, the vocal  
 “ statue, vulgarly called Memnon”.——

“ The people of the Thebais affirm the statue  
 “ we call Memnon is that of the Egyptian  
 “ Phamenophis (*o*)”. The *Pb*, in their language, was the masculine article (*p*), and the true name, therefore, was Amenophis. When Cambyfes had broken the statue, it, probably, long ceased to found; or Herodotus, who travelled Egypt not long after the Persian conquest, would not have forgotten a fact so extraordinary. The Ptolemies, having founded a kingdom in Egypt, favoured arts and sciences, and the statue, placed on its base, then continued to be heard, as Manetho

(*o*) Pausanius in Atticis.

(*p*) Jablonski de Memnone.

reports (q) but not in so distinct a manner as formerly: The Romans conquered Egypt, three centuries after; and eagerly went to admire its antiquities; among them was Germanicus—"Who could not resist (r) his desire to behold the miracles of Egypt, the most astonishing of which is the stone statue of Memnon, that, on the moment the first beams of the sun shine upon it, pronounces vowels \*; and the pyramids, which rise like mountains amid almost inaccessible sands." Numerous inscriptions confirm the account of Tacitus, among which is the following, on the right leg of the statue. *I, C. Lælia, wife of Africanus the Prefect, heard the voice of Memnon, at half after six in the morning, in the first year of the reign of Domitian, &c.*—And this on its left leg: *I, Publius Balbinus, heard the divine voice of the vocal statue of Memnon, otherwise Phamenoph, in company with the lovely Queen, Sabina, (the wife of Adrian). The*

(q) Syncelli Chronographia: Manetho was a sacred writer of Egypt, under the first Ptolemy, and understood the hieroglyphic language.

(r) Tacit. Annal. lib. 2.

\* Tacitus reads *vocalem sonum reddens*. T.

*sun was in the first hour of its course, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Adrian.—Julia Camilla commanded me to engrave these words, at the instant Adrian the August heard the voice of Memnon. And, on the same side, I, Mithridaticus, Tribune of the Twelfth Legion (\*), heard the voice of Memnon, at six in the morning.*

A thousand other inscriptions, which it were useless to cite, attest the same fact; and, when to these authorities we add those of Strabo and Tacitus, incredulity cannot resist such witnesses. The marble, on which they have been preserved sixteen hundred years, is a durable book that deposes in favour of the voice of Amenophis. But what must we hence conclude? Did the nature of the stone produce such a phænomenon? So Pausanias seems to think. “A stone (*s*),  
 “ shown at Megara, yields, when struck with  
 “ flint, a sound which imitates the vibrations  
 “ of a string on an instrument. The Colossus  
 “ I saw at Thebes, beyond the Nile, sur-

\* Read twenty second—Vide Jablonski and the inscriptions in Pococke. T.

(*s*) In Atticis.

“ prized me still more. It daily produces,  
 “ at sun-rising, a sound as powerful as the  
 “ strings of a lyre which break when over-  
 “ stretched.” Philostratus, fond of the  
 marvellous, sets no bounds to his credulity.  
 “ The statue of Memnon (*t*), though of  
 “ stone, was endowed with speech. Joyous  
 “ at the sight of his mother, he saluted her,  
 “ at sun-rising, with a gracious voice, and,  
 “ toward sun-setting, expressed his grief for  
 “ her absence, by a melancholy and mournful  
 “ sound.—This marble, also, had the faculty  
 “ of shedding tears, at will; and Echo, it is  
 “ said, replied to its voice, and perfectly  
 “ imitated its expressions of joy and grief.”  
 An ancient grammarian (*u*) says, this statue  
 was formed in so marvellous a manner that  
 it saluted the King and the Sun.

These passages will not lead us to believe  
 marble might yield a sound such as has been  
 attributed to Memnon. The empty sarco-  
 phagus of the great chamber of the pyramid,  
 I know, resounded, in a very sonorous manner,

(*t*) Vita Apollonii Tyanæi.

(*u*) Cited by Jablonski: de Memnone.

when struck with stone, or metal ; but, however disposed, the Sun's rays, by enlightening it, could produce nothing similar. Let us suppose the priests of Thebes had brought the mechanic arts to their present perfection ; and, equally ingenious with Vaucanson, and other celebrated artists, had formed a speaking head, with the springs so arranged as to pronounce the vowels at sun-rising. Cambyfes destroyed this wonderful mechanism, by overthrowing the upper part of the statue ; and the testimonies I have cited speak only of the trunk, still seen on its pedestal. It is then natural to attribute the sound of the mutilated Colossus to the artifice of the priests, who opposed this pretended miracle to the first progress of Christianity. The voice of Amenophis has, certainly, never been heard since the commencement of the fourth age of the church, when Egypt was converted to Christianity.

Let us endeavour to discover the purport of the priests in forming this vocal statue. We know they had consecrated inferior deities, to preserve the memory of their most famous discoveries ; and Amenophis was, no doubt, formed with the same intention. The concurrence

currence of certain passages in the antients may give strength to this conjecture. You recollect, Sir, in a temple of Abydos, which Strabo also calls the temple of Memnon (*x*), the priests repeated the seven vowels as a hymn, and forbade entrance to Musicians. Demetrius Phalereus confirms this. “ In  
 “ Egypt the priests used the seven vowels,  
 “ instead of hymns, to celebrate the gods;  
 “ repeating them, successively, with their  
 “ proper tone, which continuation of sounds,  
 “ so modulated, served them instead of flutes  
 “ and citharæ, producing an agreeable melody.” The ancients, and Jablonski (*y*), who has collected their testimonies with extreme care, affirm these vowels were consecrated to the seven planets, and that the statue of Amenophis repeated them at a stated time. Lucian makes Eucrates speak thus: “ I  
 “ heard Memnon, in Egypt, not according  
 “ to his usual custom, make an unmeaning  
 “ noise, but pronounce an oracle, in seven  
 “ sounds.” This may be mere pleasantry, in Lucian; but it originated in the persuasion

(*x*) Lib. 17.

(*y*) De Memnone.

that, before Cambyfes had broken the Coloffus, it uttered the feven vowels. The following dialogue, written in Greek, on its left leg, is another proof.

*Cambyfes mutilated me; I who, from marble, was formed into the Sun's image. I formerly poffeffed the melodious voice of Memnon. Cambyfes deprived me of thofe accents by which I expreffed my joy and grief.*

*What thou relateft is moft pitiable: thy voice is now obfcure, and unintelligible. Unhappy ftatue! I deplore the misfortune by which thou art thus reduced.*

The Egyptians held the Universe was created at the vernal equinox. “ They fay  
 “ (z) that, at the birth of nature, when the  
 “ ftars began to move in fpace, Aries was  
 “ in the middle of Heaven, the Moon in  
 “ Cancer, the Sun rofe with Leo, Mercury  
 “ with Virgo, Venus with Libra, Mars was  
 “ in Scorpio, Jupiter in Sagittarius, and  
 “ Saturn in Capricorn.” Syncellus (a) found, in an old Egyptian Chronicle, that after a revolution of 36525 years the Zodiac would

(z) Macrob. Somn. Scipionis...

(a) Chronographia.

be in its first position; that is to say, that the first minute of the first degree of the equinoctial line would begin with the sign Aries. I leave these things to the discussion of Astronomers, but they shew the vernal equinox, in Egypt, principally drew the attention of the learned and the people. Amoun, a symbolical deity, was consecrated to it, and the festivals in his honour all related to that interesting period. From this they dated their astronomical year; and in this, according to the priests, the seven planets would again begin their course, which they allegorically named celestial music. It was then, too, that Amenophis pronounced the seven vowels (symbols of the planets) which composed the terrestrial music. Thus might this famous statue, in sacred language, be called the cousin of Osiris (*b*), and the image of the Sun (*c*); since it imitated, on earth, the Sun's office in the Heavens. The priests, in making it repeat these seven sounds, whence all languages have been formed, and which so marvellously paint our thoughts, were

(*b*) Diod. Sic.

(*c*) See the Dialogue above cited.



desirous of making their most excellent discovery immortal; a discovery which, according to Plato, must either be invented by a divine man or a god. It is possible, also, that the shadow of this Colossus served to indicate the moment of the equinox; so, at least, we may be led to think from its name, formed from Ame nouphi (*d*), teller of good tidings (*e*). The Greeks adopted these ancient ideas when they attributed to Apollo (the Sun) the invention of the lyre and music. This allegory, which denoted the admirable harmony of the spheres, became obscured by poetical fictions, and was no longer understood.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(*d*) Jablonſki de Memnone.

(*e*) The Sun's arrival at the Equator promised the cessation of the south wind, and the coming of the inundation, which occasioned the Egyptians to observe it so carefully.

## L E T T E R    X X X I X .

REFLECTIONS ON THE RELIGION OF  
EGYPT.

*The Egyptians had but two religious dogmas, that of a creating deity, and the immortality of the soul; the rest was all allegory, and this worship was preserved pure within the temples. The necessity of using emblematic figures, before the invention of letters, insensibly led to their adoration, which happened when the easy method of writing occasioned the sense of the hieroglyphics to be forgotten. Conjecture concerning the gods of Laban.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**I**NDULGE me, Sir, in a few short reflections on a religion whose mysteries I have interpreted. It contained but two established principles, that of the Creator, an Infinite Spirit, and the Immortality of the Soul. The first is demonstrated by the temples of Phtha, Neith,

Neith, and Cneph, consecrated to the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Supreme Being. The second by the care with which bodies were embalmed, and the prayer recited at the death of an Egyptian. The temple of Cneph, in the island of Elephantina, may be regarded as the most ancient in Egypt ; for, before the people descended into the valley, where the stagnant waters of the Nile formed impenetrable marshes, till drained and rendered proper for agriculture by men's labours, according to Herodotus, they inhabited the mountains beside the cataract. This monument, then, is a testimony their worship of the Creator preceded every other, and we may, even, safely affirm it was preserved, in all its purity, among the priests ; for men once, by the effort of reason, attaining the knowledge of one God, or receiving this knowledge by tradition, cannot, while forming an enlightened society, fall back to idolatry, which always supposes profound ignorance.

All the remaining Egyptian theology was purely allegorical, which included the course of the sun, moon, and stars, and the most remarkable phenomena of nature, each of which

which was personified in the sacred language of the priests. But, far from adoring, they considered them only as admirable signs, in which the splendor of the most high was made manifest. This religion was, probably, so first taught, but insensibly corrupted, because the vulgar, accustomed to see the symbolical figures I have mentioned, in the sanctuary, and, when taken thence, at certain periods, to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving to the creator, forgot the invisible object of adoration in the emblem. But, wherefore did not the priests remove this blindness? Wherefore enslave a nation by such wretched superstition? It was not their intent, at first, no doubt; but the necessity of expressing themselves by allegorical fables, before the invention of letters, and keeping them in the temples, accustomed the people to hold them sacred. When writing became familiar, and they had wholly forgotten their first signification, they no longer prescribed bounds to their veneration, but actually worshipped symbols which their ancestors had only honoured. Osiris and Isis became the tutelar deities of Egypt; Serapis presided over the inundation;

Apis

Apis presaged abundance ; and the evil genius Typhon menaced destructive ills. Deeply impressed on their minds, it was difficult to erase these ideas without overthrowing the established religion. It may be, too, for men were ever the same, the priests adroitly profited by this ignorance, to make themselves mediators between heaven and earth, and the dispensers of the divine will : yet we ought to be circumspect in presuming to judge a body of the learned, who published the wise laws that Athens profited by, and raised so great a number of useful and durable monuments, when we reflect that the Hebrews, though kept separate from the Egyptians, and in the ancient faith of Abraham, by their leaders, and prophets, no sooner came to the desert, than, profiting by the absence of Moses, who waited on the mountain to receive the commandments, they forced Aaron to cast them a golden calf for a god. So true is it that sensible objects have more power over the multitude than all the precepts of wisdom. Reasoning impartially, we must perceive it is equally difficult and dangerous to shew mankind the truth. The greatest philosophers

philosophers of Greece and Rome, as well as the Egyptian priests, acknowledged only one God. Mythology to them was a chain of allegories, veiling physical effects, and natural causes ; yet they bowed before the statues of Jupiter, Pallas, and Venus. Socrates, alone, had the fortitude to exclaim against these fabulous deities, and Socrates was obliged to swallow poison. If you wish to recollect a more recent example of the danger of enlightening the world, remember Galileo, who, after having been obliged to ask pardon on his knees for daring to speak the truth, and announce a most important discovery, was persecuted the remainder of his life, and died in exile. Heroic as it is to die a martyr in such a case, there are few minds capable of this heroism.

These facts, and many others I might cite, prove that, though the Egyptian priests were culpable for concealing the light from the people they should have instructed, we must not condemn them with too much rigour ; for, in these distant ages, when they spoke but by types, idolatry took rapid strides, and it was scarcely possible in destroying it  
not

not to destroy religion. The gods of Laban, which Rebecca stole, were hieroglyphics, the signification of which was probably lost to Laban, and he adored these images because they descended to him from his forefathers. The same thing happened in Egypt, where hieroglyphics became the divinities of the people, when they could no longer comprehend their meaning. There was but one way to extinguish superstition, and this must have been by the destruction of these hieroglyphics; but this sacrifice would have robbed the priests of their knowledge, and of the absolute empire they exercised over the mind. There are individuals sufficiently generous to renounce the seductive charms of power, from pure motives of benevolence, but no body of men was ever capable of an effort so sublime.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XL.

## REMARKS ON THE HIEROGLYPHICS.

*Hieroglyphics the first written language ; more ancient than the deluge ; their meaning lost, under the monarchs of the lower empire ; and might, perhaps, be recovered by a perfect knowledge of the Coptic, or by a journey to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, where an Egyptian colony settled, and where, it is probable, the ancient language, books, and interpretation of the hieroglyphics, are preserved.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**H**IEROGLYPHICS, Sir, formed the first written language of men, and are imitative and allegorical characters, differing from letters, because, one paints the thoughts by marks and sounds, and the other by figures only. Their antiquity approaches the time of the deluge ; and, perhaps, precedes it ;  
for



for before that event men possessed arts and sciences, and, as they engraved on stone, some of those monuments might have escaped the general destruction.

Clemens Alexandrinus enumerates a great number of books attributed to Thoth, that is to say, approved by the academies, and published under this name; and even cites several of them. The first, said he, contained sacred hymns, the second rules for kings; the four following treated of astronomy, and the observations of the Egyptians. Ten others contained the science of hieroglyphics, geography, and cosmography. A like number included the code of laws, religion, and holy discipline; and the six last were a compleat treatise on physic. These works have undergone the fate of so many others. A Barbarian, whose name posterity must detest, used them, for six months, to heat the baths of Alexandria. But most of these Egyptian books were only copies; the originals remain sculptured in a thousand places, on obelisks, and the walls of temples and caverns; and these are what the learned of all nations ought to endeavour to read. Manetho, high priest, and sacred writer, among the Egyptians,

tians, thence collected the history he wrote, under the Ptolomies. About three centuries after, Hermapion interpreted the obelisk of Heliopolis, transported to Rome by Augustus; since whom no author has understood the hieroglyphics, or none whose works have descended to us. Ammianus Marcellinus, who lived in the reign of Julian, affirms these characters were then unintelligible to the Latins. Are any means left of rending away the veil with which time has covered them, and explaining the facts they contain? He who should effect this would acquire immortal glory, by restoring to arts, sciences, and history, so many discoveries, lost to the world. Though I make no pretensions to this most arduous task, I will recapitulate some ideas, to which the study of the ancients, and a reiterated view of the monuments of Egypt, gave birth.

The priests are known to be the inventors of the letters called sacerdotal, with which they translated the hieroglyphics. These were universally used in the temples, and with them all that related to religion and science was written. This was an interme-

mediate dialect between the hieroglyphics and the vulgar tongue, which letter, happily, is not lost; it exists in Coptic books, with Greek and Arabic translations, and is found in a great number of manuscripts, scattered over Egypt, and in the libraries of Europe. To attain a knowledge of this sacerdotal dialect, alphabets must either be found, or passages common to both languages. On the walls of the temples, and caverns, among the hieroglyphics, are letters which differ from any known; and which, probably, were a part of the sacerdotal dialect. These are the characters that ought to be studied, as containing a key to the hieroglyphics, which they are either a continuation or interpretation of. Perhaps, a man of learning, perfectly acquainted with the Coptic, Arabic, and Hebrew, who should dedicate several years to this study, among the monuments of ancient Egypt, would accomplish an enterprise so noble.

Another reflection has particularly struck me, during my travels in this country. The Ammonians were an Egyptian colony; and the priests who rendered Jupiter Ammon famous had

had the same religion, the same information, as those of Egypt. Their god no longer utters oracles, but his temple may still subsist. The surrounding country, being very fertile, should be inhabited; and this people, having undergone no revolutions, which have so often changed Egypt during more than two thousand years, must have preserved their customs, worship, and mother tongue. The love of fame no longer inciting them to the study of arts and sciences, these are probably lost; but they may have been kept in memory by tradition. Sanchoniathon affirms he gained his information from the monuments of Egypt, and the books of the Ammonians, which books still should remain in the country that gave them birth; and, perhaps, in the sanctuary of this antique temple, defended by deserts so vast. Hither, then, might a man of learning direct his footsteps, with a hope of success. The road is strewn with dangers. Alexander, with numerous attendants, and camels loaded with water and provisions, was near perishing in the attempt. One of the armies of Cambyfes was buried under the sands, and not a

foldier escaped to revisit his native country. But what will not the fortitude of a man, guided by the light, and inflamed with the love of science, undertake? Till some erudite European has visited the temple of Ammon, and informed enlightened nations what are its treasures, and what its remains, it will be natural to suppose an Egyptian colony resides in its neighbourhood, and that this colony has preserved its native tongue, and the interpretation of hieroglyphics. I am further led to believe this colony exists, because the Oases I have traced on the map are still inhabited, and the Bey of Girga sends a Cachef to govern the one which is nearest to that city. A traveller who should dare to traverse the deserts which divide them from the banks of the Nile, would find monuments infinitely curious, and, hitherto, unknown.

I have the honour to be, &c.

## L E T T E R XLI.

## PLAN OF AN INTERESTING JOURNEY NEVER YET PERFORMED.

*To examine the great lake Menzala, and the ruins to be found in its Isles; visit Pelusium, Farama, and the Oases; stay at Syene, to observe the solstitial well; traverse Yemen, and collect knowledge and manuscripts; remain at Mecca, during the pilgrimage; and, bearing from that city, and from Medina, works, and information, unknown in Europe, travel Arabia Petræa, and Deserta, and make some stay at Damascus, and depart from thence to Europe.*

To M. L. M.

Grand Cairo.

**M**ANY curious things remain to be verified in Egypt, and the following are propositions offered to whoever desire to render themselves useful in arts and sciences, and acquire such precious information as shall honour their country.

The great lake Menzala should be examined ; its outlets into the Mediterranean sounded ; the Isle of Tanis landed at ; where, according to the Arabian writers, and the natives, grand ruins, and antique marbles, are to be found. The voyage should be continued to the extremity of the lake, and the remains of Pelusium, and Farama, visited, where the Arabian geographers describe a tomb which should be that of Pompey the Great.

The traveller should descend the canal of Sebennyty, now Semennoud, to the lake Bourlos, and examine the ruins of ancient Butis, where Herodotus places the sanctuary of Latona, hewn from one astonishing block of granite, which I have described, after that historian.

The remains of Naucratis, and Sais, near Faoua ; and those of Phacusa, and Bubastus, by which the famous canal of the Ptolemies passed, should be searched.

A tribe of wandering Arabs should be treated with, that he might proceed to the Oasis of Ammon, not far from the lake Mœris, and from thence to the emple of  
Jupiter

Jupiter Ammon, so famous in antiquity, and where the ancient language of Egypt might be hoped to be recovered; and, perhaps, books which might serve to interpret the hieroglyphics.

The three Oases should be visited, and the people, and the monuments, they contain, now lost to the world, described.

A stay of eight or ten days should be made at Syene, to discover the Solstitial well, and verify the admirable observation of the ancient Egyptian priests, who when the sun arrived at the tropic saw his entire image, at noon, in the water, at the bottom of this astronomical well.

No European, for these eighteen hundred years, has travelled the places I have mentioned, or verified the facts. Such discoveries require a man well acquainted with antiquity, and perfectly instructed in the manners religion, and language of the Arabs; nor need such a man end his travels here: he might pass the red sea, as a Mahometan merchant, visit all its ports, rest some months at Moka, where he would find rare manuscripts; go to Sannaa, the ancient capital of the kings of the Homeritæ, who governed Yemen, in



the time of the Ptolemies, examine this rich country, and, joining the caravan, repair to Mecca. Here he might remain under the pretence of religion and trade, examine the library begun long before Mahomet, buy the scarcest manuscripts, or have them copied, and, after having observed the religion, commerce, and buildings in that city, as ancient as Ishmael, he might depart with the caravan of Damascus, and repose, after his fatigue, in that beautiful capital of Syria, where he might also procure a great number of uncommon books, &c. &c.

Whoever could succeed in such a voyage, the pains and perils of which are innumerable, might afford Europe a history, absolutely new, concerning the nations of Arabia; the interior parts of which are as little known as the forests of New Zealand. Numerous interesting discoveries might be added to natural history, and geography, and, perhaps, he would have the happiness to restore to Tacitus, Livy, and Diodorus Siculus those parts of their immortal works which are lost; for they were translated by the Arabs.

When I had finished my translation of the Koran, and the life of Mahomet, full of enthusiasm

enthusiasm for science, this was the plan I then proposed to myself. Obstacles occurred, which prevented its execution, and gave me much chagrin : but the laws of necessity must be obeyed. I have since abandoned my project, and, now, confess I want courage to undertake it, because, from experience, I know the dangers that must be encountered ; and, because, after five years abode in my native country, to the climate of which I am once more accustomed, my health might not, a second time, perhaps, support the devouring heats of Africa and Arabia. Yet let me hope some European, thirsting for fame, and more rich, or more favoured, than I am, will gain immortality by collecting the information and manuscripts I have described ; and, particularly, by acquiring for more enlightened nations the unknown history of the people of Yemen, Mecca, Medina, and the interior parts of Arabia.

Such is the information which five years travels over the East, and the study of the antients, have procured me. You, Sir, who, from that charming retreat which your labours and knowledge have enriched with the

. rarest

rarest plants the world contains, and a multitude of scarce books, have supplied me with the necessary leisure to collect, and arrange, these letters, published under the auspices of an august prince, who honours you with his esteem ; may you find pleasure in reading them, and accept them as a testimony of gratitude.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very respectful,

Humble servant,

S A V A R Y.

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189, l. 64, *et alibi passim*, for Cheik, read Sheikh.

273, for Charakhania, read Sharakania.

VOL. II. 383, l. 17, for Nicopolis, read Nilopolis.







1. 64, *et alibi passim*, for Cheik, read Sheikh.

for Charakhanis, read Sharakanis.

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